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Bulletin—

of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

FIRST QUARTER - 1956

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EMERGING FROM THE CHRYSALIS!

by Olivier Béguin

IN this issue of the Bulletin several reports are reproduced which were given by representatives of Bible Societies on the continent of Europe at the U.B.S. regional conference held at Boldern, near Zürich, in September, 1955. These reports are evidence that a new spirit is growing in Europe. This was also confirmed at two other meetings last September, the one in East Berlin, which brought together representatives of almost all the East German Bible Societies, the other in Belgium, attended by Bible Society colporteurs from Belgium and France. (see Bulletin 24, p.34).

In spite of the variety of aims, interests, problems and participants, giving each conference its own character, several common trends were evident at all three meetings.

The first feature common to each gathering was the **reaffirmation of the missionary task** of Bible Societies. There was a growing consciousness that Bible Societies must not be merely publishing houses, nor solely agents for the sale of Scriptures. Their true *raison d'être* was seen to be the missionary distribution of the Book of books.

The translation of the Word of God into the different languages of mankind, its publication in as large editions as possible, and its distribution through colportage and other means, were seen as equally important aspects of this missionary nature of the Bible Societies. Even if the majority of the continental Societies, formed on the basis of this missionary concern, lost their apostolic sense during the intervening years, yet the important thing is that they are rediscovering now this missionary dimension that belongs to all true Bible Societies.

This renewal takes two forms. On the one hand a number of Societies—in Germany and Norway, for example—are reconsidering the problem of the distribution of the Scriptures within their own countries. Although officially every citizen is born into membership of the state church, many Christians (no doubt nominal !) do not appear to possess a copy of the Bible or even of the New Testament. The Bible Societies have now become aware of this situation and consider it their duty to try to remedy it. On the other hand an increasing number of continental Societies are becoming aware of their responsibility to help in providing Scriptures for people throughout the world. Even in countries like Eastern Germany and Hungary the wish is being expressed to be able to participate in this immense and splendid privilege of giving to people of all languages and nations, as a means of their salvation, this book of the Good News of the love of God in Jesus Christ—a task which up to the present has been almost entirely borne by the B.F.B.S. and the Scottish, American and Dutch Societies.

A second trend in the present evolution is **the growing concern regarding the rightful use of the Scriptures.** It is not enough to ensure that each member of the Church possesses a Bible, or at least a New Testament ; a Bible Society cannot be indifferent to the fate of these books in the hands of the recipients. This is clearly a primary task of the churches. No Bible Society would think of undertaking responsibility in this domain outside the action taken by the churches. But one has to admit that often the churches themselves have failed or fallen short in this task. A new departure is now needed. In Norway it is the Bible Society which, with the approval of the churches,

organises groups for Bible reading or Bible study in the parishes ; in Germany the Bible Societies and Inner Mission collaborate in restoring the Bible to its rightful place in the life of the churches. In Belgium and France the Bible Societies are expected to provide some guide for Bible reading. These developments provide a whole range of problems, but there is no doubt—particularly since the three meetings mentioned above—that in what is commonly termed " biblical renewal " the Bible Societies must also contribute their experience and take their share of responsibility.

The third trend is towards a recognition of the **interdependence of churches and Bible Societies.** A church which does not support and encourage the work of the Bible Societies is failing in one of its tasks. The missionary enterprise without the Bible is unthinkable. To support the missions without at the same time supporting the translation, production and missionary distribution of the Scriptures is only a half-measure. But a Bible Society is also failing in its duty when it omits to recall the Church to its responsibility in relation to Bible work and ceases to be, within the Church, a constant reminder of one of the essential forms of the missionary commission which Jesus Christ entrusted to His people. Every truly responsible Bible Society should be a ferment in the life of a church ; this is where the spiritual responsibility of the Bible Society lies, alongside its material responsibility for providing the churches and missions with the book which is at the centre of all Christian witness and all faithful Christian life.

Since the Norwegian Bible Society reawakened to its missionary task, the life of the whole Norwegian Church has experienced a true and living renewal of interest among its members in the Bible and in Bible study. In Hungary, since the National Bible Council took over responsibility for the translation, production and distribution of the Bible (this was formerly done by an Agency of the B.F.B.S.) all the Hungarian churches have been quickened and have become actively interested in this work, which was hitherto unknown to them. In the last issue of the BULLETIN it was possible to give a glimpse of the rich results of the cross-fertilisation which is taking place in Belgium, where churches and Bible Societies support one another, to the greater benefit of the evangelical cause in that country.

The fourth note sounded at these meetings was **the importance of carefully planned co-operation among Bible Societies.** The revival of missionary interest among the continental Societies calls inevitably for such co-operation. Bible Societies are discovering that they can help each other, learn from each other, and work together on common projects.

But more than that, they have come to recognise that no real progress can be made towards becoming fully-fledged Societies unless the work can be done " in co-operation with," as part of, a world-wide fellowship. The big Bible Societies, British, American and Dutch, are known to have covered the world with the ramifications of their work. Whether the missionary concern of the continental Societies is awakened depends on whether opportunities exist for them to co-operate in the work abroad. It would be in vain to suggest that they should limit themselves to the missionary circulation of the Book at home ; world consciousness is too strong to-day. The fact that evangelism (at home) and mission (abroad) are complementary to each other —which has been stressed so much lately in Christian thinking—received new expression during the Bible Society meetings. A Bible Society can only

live healthily if it reaches out in both directions. Only then will the churches give their full support to the cause and become conscious, in return, of their own need to give to the Bible its rightful place in their own life.

For years Bible Society work as carried out by the major Bible Societies of the world appeared somewhat sectarian, or at least foreign, to many church people on the continent. The most encouraging feature of last September's meetings is that in this respect too a change is taking place and that the Bible Societies of continental Europe are earning a recognised place in the community. Dr. Alfred Müller, General Secretary of the Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany, wrote in a recent article of recent developments in Bible Society work in Germany : " In the most diverse fields there are indications that Christians (in Germany) are ready to recognise again in the missionary use of the Bible an indispensable expression of an active Christian life and to take their share in it."

As they emerge from their chrysalis the butterflies still have to dry their wings and to gather strength ! But everyone who has in the past regretted the dormant condition of Bible Society work in Europe will rejoice : life is beginning to stir anew. The day is not far distant, we may hope and pray, when the continental Bible Societies will have entered with full strength into partnership with the other Societies in the world-wide, unfulfilled task.

*

Just as this issue was going to press news arrived from Switzerland of a reorganisation of Bible Society work in that country, providing a striking illustration of the change referred to in the above notes. On 26th November a meeting of the Federation of Swiss Bible Societies was held in Aarau. At that meeting, the Federation reorganised itself into a Swiss Bible Society, which embraces not only local Bible Societies, but other groups active in Bible distribution, like the Freundes-Dienst, which is described in one of the articles in this issue.

" The Swiss Bible Society," says the report, " has undertaken as its aim to draw together and intensify the work done in Switzerland for the production, distribution and use of the Bible. Through the agency of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, of which the Swiss Bible Society will be a member, the help given for the world wide distribution of the Bible will be strengthened and the shortage of Bibles in many countries alleviated.

"Alongside the full members of the Swiss Bible Society, who will carry on an independent work of Bible distribution, there is an auxiliary body to which local congregations, church authorities, different societies and individuals may belong, who can give direct support to the work of the Swiss Bible Society with contributions, in places where no regional Bible Society exists."

The Rev. H. L. Henriod, secretary of the Société évangélique de Genève, who chaired the Amougies conference, has been appointed chairman of the new organisation ; the Rev. O. Naegeli, former chairman of the Federation, becomes its Executive Secretary. These officers, together with three lay people, form the Executive Committee.

The duties of the Swiss Bible Society are, according to the new statutes : to co-operate in the world-wide distribution of the Bible ; to inform the public of Bible Society activities ; to exchange information with Bible Societies in other countries ; to clarify the needs and requests for help at home and abroad ; to collect and pass on contributions ; to co-ordinate similar efforts on the part

of members ; to help in carrying out projects which are beyond the strength of individual members ; to provide lectures and material for promotion and exhibitions—and to produce an information bulletin.

Commenting upon this news, Pastor Naegeli writes : "After lively discussion the meeting took its decision unanimously. That the new name should have been proposed and adopted unanimously was a great surprise to me. Of course this is only a name. But *nomen est omen.* We maintain our federative system and our statutes ensure this. However, I am confident that in this framework we shall witness an increasing growing together of the various members of our federation. To all those present in Aarau it was clear that such a step would never have been considered but for the impetus provided by the conference in Boldern."

ROOTED IN THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE AND THE CHURCHES

by Frans Visser

IF asked what the relation is in Holland between Bible Society and churches, I could answer quite briefly : " I personify that relation." For I was appointed by the Netherlands Bible Society as secretary for Home Work, and at the same time was set apart by the Reformed Church of Amsterdam to undertake Bible Society work on behalf of my Church during the week-time. On Sundays I preach the Word in my own Church. In this way my Church recognises its responsibility for this work of the Bible Society, acknowledging this as one of her duties. This is just one particular example. In fact, almost all the Protestant churches in Holland express in some form or other a similar sense of responsibility for the work of the Bible Society. During the 140 years or more of the Netherlands Bible Society's existence, a strong bond of friendship and confidence has grown up between churches and Bible Society. Evidence of this confidence is also seen in the fact that Protestant Holland accepted so wholeheartedly the new translation of the Bible prepared by the N.B.S. and published in 1952.

It is true we are beggars (Luther)—

But let me turn to the practical aspects of Bible Society work in relation to the churches, rather than dealing with it on a higher level. The Bible Society has branches in more than seven hundred places in Holland, each with an executive committee and altogether a total of 160,000 members. These branches are interdenominational in character. Where possible all the churches are represented on the committee. This is not the case with the central executive committee, though many churches are also represented there. The responsibility of the branch committee is to make the work of the Bible Society known, to increase the number of members and to see that a copy of the Bible is provided in every home where it is wanted. Towards this end one must of course in the first place call upon the help of the church members. This must be done by begging. We are beggers, that is true ! New members must be sought. Towards this end in our "home" organisation we are not continually making special appeals for the work ; nor do we arrange for bazaars, etc., but we ask our supporters to promise to send a sum each year, and they in turn have the right of vote and a share in the responsibility for the work. We send them several times a year our leaflets with news and illustrations concerning the work, in order to stimulate their interest and to

strengthen the bonds with the Bible Society. There are moreover many churches which take an annual collection for the Bible Society and in this way express their support of our work.

Apart from this we ask from the churches an understanding of the need for this work, of our responsibility not only for the work in our own country but also for the world-wide work. "The field is the world," and we put special emphasis on the need for prayer for our translators and colporteurs, and for the tremendous significance of the whole work in the world at the present time.

—But also givers

But we come to the churches not only to beg but also to give. We come with a command which is paramount and clear : to carry out Bible distribution in our own community and in the world. Many who become convinced Christians ask : " Men and brethren, what shall we do ? " (Acts 2 : 37) To these we pass on a commission which is unmistakable : If God's Word has been spoken to someone, he will want this light to shine for others also. And the Bible Society provides opportunities for carrying out this commission. Individuals can help by offering the Bible at every house in every street of a whole village. And it can be done as a means of making possible the translation and distribution of the Gospel for the whole world. It is of great value that the churches should have such clear and visible ways of carrying out their missionary concern and the possibility of discharging Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to all people.

Moreover, the Bible Society, through its news about the provision of Scriptures for the world, brings a world outlook to the churches. One becomes aware of this in congregations when showing a film, filmstrips or an exhibition about the Bible in many languages, and about the progress of this work since the beginning of the last century. For the Christian it then becomes evident that in this Bible Society activity God is at work. Anyone, we claim, who wishes to be an optimist and is longing to see that God is faithful, anyone who is looking for signs of the coming Kingdom, should take note of the figures and statistics of the Bible Societies and should read of the experiences of the Bible translators and colporteurs. Here is something which succeeds, which goes forward according to God's promise.

We in the Bible Society also sometimes do something which the Church itself is not able to accomplish. For example, we visit schools, even State schools, and tell the young people from 14-20 years of age what everybody ought to know about the Bible. We do not give lessons in catechism (they are forbidden) but approach the subject educationally, through the history of the Bible, its influence on culture and art (Rembrand) etc. And here again the Bible Society helps the Church.

But the Bible Society brings still more to the churches. It may be only a bi-product of its activity. It should however be mentioned. This is the inter-church contacts. In many areas the Protestants are divided among various churches. But in the Bible Society they meet one another in the central committee, in local committees and in gatherings for promoting the work of the Bible Society. On such occasions it is a joy to experience unity around the Bible, this source of all that we know and believe about Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reaching the local Christian community

How do we bring all this into our local church life? We travel through towns and villages with our film "Geen Grenzen meer" (No more frontiers); we tell about our work in parish meetings for young and old, and in schools and religious education classes. We provide pastors and teachers with information and material to help in their educational work. We arrange Bible week-ends with a programme such as the following: On Saturday evening—inter-church youth gathering; on Sunday—a service including a sermon on the Bible, and an account for the Sunday School; Sunday evening—a meeting for committee members and their wives in the pastor's house. We have our exhibitions and we try, through the radio and once through television to convey our enthusiasm and share our concern for the work.

As far as results are concerned, we can at least say that the help of Protestant Holland is such that we can usually say 'yes' when a request for help with Scriptures has come to us. But we wish to do much more. And we could certainly do more, if we had more members. But things are moving thanks to the good understanding between the Bible Society and the churches in Holland. Indeed, the more active the contact between these two the better!

THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE

by Robert Steiner

THE local church is the basis of the Christian Church. This is an important fact for the Bible Societies to keep in mind. The Bible Society *grows out of* the local church—even when the Society as an organisation may have originated outside the Church. The Bible Society has its life *from* the local church, it is at work *within* that church. Thus Bible Society and Church always belong together.

I

In Germany we look upon the activity of the Bible Society in Great Britain, the Netherlands, the U.S.A. and Norway with a certain amount of envy. In some parts of Germany the situation was different in the 19th century from what it is to-day. But our Bible Societies have more and more limited themselves to providing Scriptures at reduced prices to pastors and Church members. This is particularly the case with Bibles and New Testaments, which are offered at the time of confirmation and at weddings. The churches almost everywhere are now taking this for granted. Collections are for the most part used for providing confirmation and wedding Bibles at a reduced price to pastors. And so this is now generally regarded as the task of the Bible Societies. That there could be any wider function than this does not, for the most part, occur to the pastors or church members.

Those things which are not nurtured soon fall into oblivion. This is true of Germany with regard to the service of the Bible Societies. Generally speaking nothing is known of what takes place outside our own parish boundaries. Our pastors hear very rarely, most of them never, about the great work which is being carried out in the world through the Bible Societies. Is it surprising therefore if a Bible Society in Germany is regarded only as a kind of wholesale purveyor of Bibles and New Testaments?

II

Is it possible to overcome this attitude, which has been held for decades? It seemed at first as if there were no prospect of doing so, since even among the people in authority in the Bible Societies the present position is, for the

most part, considered normal, and some even seem inclined to see in this a valuable characteristic of the Bible Societies in Germany. In so far as a change is taking place, we in Germany are facing a new beginning, though like all beginnings it is very small.

What is it that is really needed? First we must *teach people to see.* We must make people aware of Bible Society work not only in Germany but throughout the world. This is happening now to an increasing extent. Following lectures about the work of the Bible Societies in the world the question is often heard nowadays: Why have we not heard this before? For what reason have we not been told this? Lectures about the Bible have often been given in German parishes in the past, but they have mostly been concerned with historical matters. Our Church members, however, want to have put before them tasks in which they themselves can participate.

When our Church members realise the tasks that face the Bible Societies in the world, then their understanding of these tasks is awakened. A pastors' conference on the subject of the revision of the Martin Luther translation was arranged some time ago. During the discussion the speaker also mentioned the activity of the Bible Societies. In the sheer comparison of the work of the Bible Societies in Germany with that of other Societies in the world, those present could see how necessary this work was. The result was that the request was made to the lecturer: Please come to our parishes, for our church members must hear all this.

Secondly, it is essential that we should really *love this work.* We who are engaged in it must be in it with our whole hearts. When it was reported in one parish that Gospels and Acts were being printed for the Mentawai Islands, and the need for these Gospels in the missionary work was presented, the immediate answer was that the missionaries in these islands must not be left in the lurch and therefore the parish must co-operate. Here again is a small beginning. A similar experience can always be had if the heart is set on fire for this service by means of lectures. More and more there dawns on them a recognition of the fact that they, the church members, are there to serve the Bible Societies.

III

Two immediate objectives can be suggested to our church-goers:

(1) *Intercession*: We should point out to our church members that prayer is needed, for example for the Bible translators, as well as for the colporteurs throughout the world. This intercession has so far hardly entered the minds of our church people. And yet a quite special bond is formed in this way, especially if translators and colporteurs are mentioned by name and report is given on their work.

(2) *The joy of giving*: In Germany, following the second world war, we very often heard from leading people in the Bible Societies that we could not ask for gifts for Bible distribution from church members because they were already receiving too many claims for every possible kind of cause. Whoever dares in spite of this to ask for such gifts, and mentions special tasks, will always find a response beyond all expectation.

There are also certain tasks which apply particularly to Germany:

(3) *Practical service*: First we should make Scriptures available for the refugees and repatriates. So far the Bible Societies have only seen their

responsibility in this respect to an insufficient extent. For this reason other Bible Societies have filled the gap and distributed Bibles ; Church members in some parishes have also done the same.

Further, we should become more concerned with the supply of Scriptures for the mission field. In Germany we have regional missionary societies, in the same way as we have regional Bible Societies. Therefore the German Bible Societies have a responsibility for meeting the needs for Bibles and New Testaments in the area of work of the respective missionary societies. This is understood by our church members. Consequently a still closer co-operation is needed between Bible Societies and missionary societies.

If we still ask about the relationship of the Bible Society to Church leadership, we are bound to say that up to the present the latter have taken a friendly attitude towards the work of the Bible Societies, but considered that they did not need to trouble themselves about this work since it was being done by the Bible Societies. For some time now this conception has changed, and several church leaders have asked again : What ought we to be doing ? And a responsible theologian in a church stated : We must make a new beginning. If old institutions stand in the way, then we will begin with new ones, even if we can no longer count upon the Bible Society at present at work in our Landeskirche because of its lack of readiness to follow new paths and take up new tasks. Such statements are enheartening and lead one to look forward to further encouraging developments.

BIBLE WORK IN HUNGARY

by Imre Kadar

I SHOULD like to place what I have to say under the text " We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him " (Romans 8 : 28, ARSV).

It was indicative of the spiritual weakness of Hungarian Protestantism that the production and distribution of the 400-year old Hungarian Bible had, during the past hundred years, to be undertaken by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which has earned through this work a place of immortal honour in the history of the Hungarian Church. It was a great contribution on the part of the B.F.B.S. that during that century, which was an unfortunate time of inner weakness in the life of Hungarian Christendom, the great work of Scripture distribution in Hungary did not have to stand still.

Seven years ago the B.F.B.S. handed over the whole responsibility for the production and distribution of the Hungarian Bible to the Reformed Church in Hungary. At the same time the Reformed Church, together with the other Protestant churches, proceeded to found the Hungarian Bible Council as a working committee of representatives of the Reformed, the Evangelical Lutheran and the Federation of Free Chuches, in which Baptist, Methodist and other small churches are federated.

Translation and Revision

The task of the Bible Council lies above all in the safeguarding of the text of the Hungarian Bible. The last revision undertaken at the beginning of this century bears many traces of rationalism. This revision had scarcely appeared and been put into use by the parishes, when the necessity of a new re-

vision was announced. But this revision could not be completed for more than 40 years—although the B.F.B.S. also made a large contribution towards it, and although there was no lack of distinguished scholars. We must see that the essential reason for this delay was to be found in the fact that in these decades the Holy Scripture had not yet become the most central feature of Hungarian Church life. The political trends foreign to the Word of God—chauvinism, antisemitism, irredentism, etc.—also brought their dangerous influence to bear on the life of the Church and on its preaching.

The penitence of Hungarian Protestantism after the second world war, and the experience of atonement through God's compassion, brought with them that general renewal through which the message of God and the Bible cause have become the most important and sacred concern of Hungarian Christians. In Hungary to-day one can scarcely imagine a pastor who would not see in the Holy Scriptures the sole measuring-rod of his preaching. And one can also not imagine a parish which would want to tolerate such a pastor. Countless church members read the Holy Scriptures daily and in all the parishes several Bible study groups meet weekly.

Thanks to this situation, the work of Bible revision has also become a matter of concern on the part of the whole Hungarian Church. While until recently responsibility for Bible revision was borne by only the small circle of "experts," to-day hundreds of parishes pray for this work. The annual Bible Day is observed in every reformed parish. The collection taken on that day covers a large part of the expenses of Bible revision. It was possible to prepare the revised text of the whole New Testament and of the first books of the Old Testament in an astonishingly short time, and they are now published in several trial editions. The five books of Moses, the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and Samuel have been printed. The Books of Kings are at present in the press and Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther are now ready for the printer. The Commission for Bible revision, in which the professors for Old Testament of the Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran theological academies work together, meets for a whole week of every month, from morning till evening. Each time a different parish sends some food parcels for the physical needs of the translators. From all parts of the country thousands of comments on the trial volumes arrive, and not only from pastors but also from laymen.

The special commission for Old Testament will also, we hope, have concluded its work in two to three years time. The text of the new Hungarian Bible revision in modern speech will then be submitted to the competent Synods. In general it is thought that the work so far produced improved the quality of the Hungarian Bible substantially. Therein we see another fruit of that faith which, through God's mercy, has been purified in the fire of repentance and has endowed Hungarian Christendom with a new sense of gratitude and service.

Production and Distribution

As far as Bible distribution is concerned, it can be said that there are few Protestant homes in Hungary in which there is no Bible. (Unfortunately many of these Bibles still lie unused to-day; but many have come into use stirred into life by God.) Bible distribution is carried out exclusively through the parishes. Pastors and workers in the parish Scripture mission regard it as one of their most important tasks to see that each single Bible gets into the hands of those who will treasure it and, it is hoped, will use it as the revelation of God. We offer the Bible unabridged below the cost of produc-

tion. This price is considerably cheaper than that of books of a similar size and standard of production. The renewed gifts of paper from the Bible Societies in Britain and America have greatly helped to make this possible.

In addition, the Hungarian Bible Council sees that it has a task in supplying Hungarians living outside Hungary with Bibles. We have been able recently to send considerable numbers of Bibles to Hungarian Christians living both in eastern Europe and in various western countries. During 1955 we sent 7,800 copies of the Bible to settlers living in Rumania and to the Slovakian sister churches. At the request of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES we have had printed 12,500 full Bibles and 5,000 New Testaments in the revised text, for use among Hungarian Protestants living scattered in different parts of the world. Our Church covered a not insignificant part of the cost. Thus we can thank God for this privilege that we have become not only a receiving but also a giving Church.

The Hungarian Bible Council also undertakes the appropriate distribution of the critical editions of the Hebrew and Greek original texts, which we receive each year from the U.B.S., primarily to theological academies and pastors.

Because of its particular position, the Hungarian Bible Council is also responsible for the production of scholarly editions related to the study of the Scriptures. We are thus very grateful also that we have been able to produce an enlarged second edition of the Greek/Hungarian New Testament dictionary. In addition, an edition of a Hungarian Sprachschlüssel to the Greek New Testament similar to the Rienecker Sprachschlüssel, but containing more copious exegetical comments, is already on the press and should appear shortly. Some months ago we started to edit a large Bible commentary, to appear in one volume, and we hope—with God's help—to be able to complete this work during the coming year.

Thus in the midst of a great historical change in our Church, the sense of responsibility is renewed for proclaiming God's Word and for the cause of the Scriptures. In this way God has been able to show that the life of the Church is really independent of the changing and varying order of society and depends alone on Him Who is its head—Jesus Christ. To *Him* is given all power in heaven and on earth—in Switzerland, in the U.S.A. and in Hungary. He is also with us every day until the end of the world.

BIBLE SOCIETY AND CHURCHES IN NORWAY

by ALF HAUGE

EVER since its formation the Norwegian Bible Society has aimed at having an organized collaboration with the local Norwegian churches. Bible Society members were especially sought from among the pastors, and the members of the local church formed a branch of the Society. The task of the branch was Bible distribution among the local congregation. In exchange for membership fees and other gifts contributed, the corresponding value in Scriptures was forwarded to the branch. Thanks to this organized co-operation between Bible Society and local church, during the course of the first hundred years the goal was reached of placing the Scriptures in every Norwegian home. As long as there was a real need of Bibles to be met, the co-operation as indicated here worked well. But gradually this distribution in the local churches, which was confined to free copies of the New Testament

or of complete Bibles for confirmation candidates, diminished. For this reason the distribution of confirmation Testaments is now a hard and fast rule in most churches.

The co-operation achieved in this way is, however, basically only between publisher and purchaser. Indeed, the task of the Bible Society was more and more reduced to that of a publishing house. Recently the committee has come to realise that a Bible Society must have a wider perspective.

First, the task is not fulfilled by offering copies of the Holy Scripture to the local church and to individuals. The many dusty and unread Bibles and New Testaments show Christian neglect. Certainly the task of stimulating and helping Bible reading is an obvious task of the parish. But the responsibility for carrying out this task belongs to the Bible Society. In the same way that Sunday Schools, youth work, foreign missions, etc., are encouraged and inspired at the local level by the work of specialised central bodies, so must Bible work be stimulated by the Bible Society.

Secondly, as long as a large proportion of humanity is still awaiting God's Word, the task of a Bible Society cannot be limited to its national responsibility. We have recognised the following : if we refuse to take part in the world-wide Bible work we shall lose a blessing which otherwise would have benefited our national work.

Thus in 1950 we faced the question : how can the Bible Society fulfil the two newly-recognised tasks ? The answer was clear : it will only be possible in organised co-operation with the parish. A new organisation must be formed. But to form a new organisation inside the Church seemed the most absurd thing to do. During the past 50 years new organisations have grown up in the Norwegian Church like mushrooms, and the most striking feature of the local church was just that of organisational satiety.

A new association ! That would never do ! We already have all too many in the church. We cannot stand any more ! We had to expect this answer from 95% of the members. But we replied ' no.' It is a question here not of an ' association,' but of building up the local congregation, which is urgent. The question is : Can three or more people be found in the church who are prepared to undertake some responsibility for this task ?

We have put great stress on the fact that it is not here a question of a new organisation which the local church has to handle, but a clear question of strengthening the life of the congregation, which urgently needs doing, and the Bible Society only wants to help in this. What is needed is not an association, with meetings and the like, but an energetic team. Nevertheless, we want this team to be organised as a collective member of the Bible Society. In this way we achieve a continuing contact in the local church, and these contacts represent, first and mainly, the congregation in relation to *us*, but at the same time they are *our* representatives in the church. As registered members they have special privileges, e.g. a higher discount on Scripture orders ; they receive our circular letters, annual reports, pamphlets, etc. We call these our collective Bible teams. The conditions for collective membership are : a minimun annual subscription of at least Kr. 50 ($7) and submission to headquarters of an annual report and accounts.

They are also called upon to see that the church observes Bible Sunday each year, the result of which, like the member's contribution, serves as a contribution to the world-wide Bible work.

It is also recommended that on Bible Sunday a special evening be arranged at which the congregation is informed about Bible work locally and in the whole world, and at which a collection is also taken. The Bible groups are also requested to work out different ways in which the church can contribute to the work.

What is described above, however, is regarded by us as only a subsidiary function of the group. Its essential task is Bible work inside the congregation. This task is three-fold :

1. *Bible distribution*

The group is responsible for the distribution of Bibles or New Testaments to new communicants and newly-weds. Here it is a case of first raising the necessary money. With the high discount mentioned above, which we allow to members, they receive good help from the Society. In this connection comes another task. Through the parishes of the Norwegian Church each year about 40,000 New Testaments are distributed as gifts to new communicants. This figure explains a characteristic feature of Norwegian statistics for distribution, namely that more than twice the number of New Testaments per thousand inhabitants are distributed each year in Norway than in any other country. The figures also give occasion for reflection. One asks : how many of these 40,000 copies are read ? We have asked the Bible groups and the pastors to take care that the distribution is not carried out indiscriminately, e.g. in cases where a large proportion of the young people in the Sunday schools or day schools have already received a New Testament or Bible. We have also recommended that, as far as possible, they should not use the cheapest editions for this purpose. It is important that the appearance of the book appeals to the young people. We have in addition recommended that the Testaments should be distributed at the time when confirmation candidates enrol for their instruction and are used by them during their course. Many churches have now begun the practice, on the first Sunday after a confirmation candidate has enrolled, of arranging a special service to which parents and other members of the family are invited, and when the New Testament is given to the candicate at a special ceremony, when the pastor speaks about the value of Bible reading. There is no doubt that the Bible groups have a great task in this respect and that they have already taken hold of it. The distribution of Scriptures in hospitals, old people's homes, etc., is also part of their task.

2. *Bible helps*

What we call Bible helps are considered by us as the most important task of the Bible groups. Their first aim is to further Bible reading. The groups are recommended to distribute or sell various helps, such as Bible reading plans, practical explanations for daily Bible reading, and other forms of help. But we have in particular urged the formation of Bible reading groups. Where possible we suggest that the committee should itself form a Bible reading group. Regular Bible reading, in a group, should be the inspiration of the parish work, and the committee's own experience in the group should lead to the formation of new groups, which would come together regularly (weekly or fortnightly), covering 5-15 houses, simply to read the Bible together. In this way there are discussions about the Bible, questions are asked and knowledge and experience shared. We believe that such small meetings in homes will mean a great deal in the general life of the congregation. Nowadays it is difficult to get people to come together in public halls ; they would sooner come to a

private home. Many people do not like passive listening ; active participation in a Bible group is more suited to the needs of present-day people.

It is desirable that at least one member of the group should be more experienced in Bible reading. This is not essential, however, since reading the Bible together will in any case become a significant stimulus to the daily use of the Bible.

3. *Bible study groups*

The Bible study groups go a step further. Their formation is also part of the responsibility of the committees. The *study* groups aim at a knowledge of and deeper penetration into the Scriptures. The methods of general study groups are suitable for this purpose. The Bible Society is a member of the Student Christian Movement, which from its side includes the student organisation which is half supported by the State. This means that the Bible study groups are eligible to share in the State subsidies for student books, and can benefit from the systematic and practical leadership of the S.C.M. A course of training for study group leaders has been started recently by the Bible Society, in co-operation with the parishes of Gross-Oslo.

In co-operation with the S.C.M. our secretaries have been engaged in preparing suitable Bible study booklets. What we hope is that a more general use of the Bible among Church members will be promoted by the work of the Bible committees, and a deeper Bible knowledge through the study groups.

If the scheme outlined above were established in 1,000 congregations of the Norwegian Church, we should have an active and flourishing life in our churches. It still rests with posterity to make such a life a reality. At the moment we are only at the beginning.

N.B.—In a letter dated December 2nd, Mr. Hauge reports : " The Rev. S. Smaadahl has, during the last four months, visited sixty congregations. Thirty new Bible teams have been founded, and during his visits eighty new Bible study groups have been started. He has held seven short courses for group leaders, with a total attendance of two-hundred persons. Two new outlines for Bible study groups have been edited by our secretaries, and eight more are in preparation."

A NEW BIBLE DISTRIBUTION PROJECT IN SWITZERLAND

by Caspar Rissi

The Freundes-Dienst, described in this article, is now one of the bodies forming the membership of the newly founded Swiss Bible Society (*see p.* 4). *Herr Josef Schmid the founder of this movement attended the Boldern conference and gave a personal testimony about this interesting development in Bible distribution work.*

The Mustard Seed

IN God's kingdom everything begins like a grain of mustard seed. The movement called " Freundes-Dienst " (Friends' service) begins with a young man on the operating table table of a hospital. His life is in great danger ; he is about to undergo his fifth operation. Then his eyes alight on a

cross which is high up in a corner of the operating theatre. This reminds the 22-year-old young man of death and of eternity. His self-righteousness breaks down, and while the nurse administers the anesthetic, the patient, in an attitude of deep repentance, puts his life into Jesus' hands. The operation is successful and the young man is saved. He realises that his life must be shaped anew, and his aim from then on is : To serve God and to help his fellow-men towards salvation and the inheritance of eternal life.

But how should this young man serve God ? He had had no training as a preacher. But God's Word said to him : " Ye shall be witnesses unto me " (Acts 1 : 8). That was sufficient for him ; he began quite simply by telling his close friends and relations, and then also his clients, about Jesus. He also distributed Christian tracts which told of salvation. The Lord blessed his simple witness and the young business man gradually became a " curer of souls " to many people. He realised more and more clearly how many people who are seeking and despondent are to be found everywhere, and how necessary missionary service is in one's own country.

The tree grows

His business took this young man to the Catholic part of Switzerland. He discovered with amazement what a shortage of Bibles existed everywhere, and in the light of Ezekiel 33 : 8-9, he recognised his great responsibility towards these fellow-men. He and his sisters sent a Gospel by post to every household in a small village and in a circular letter requested some friends to pray for this project. This first small missionary effort took place in 1951. It was never intended to form a missionary service ; it was simply an act of obedience to the divine command. It was a sowing of hope, done in the firm belief in the great promise of Isaiah 55 : 10-11.

The Devil soon sought in various ways to destroy the young tree. But God held His hand over it so that it could grow ; for it was a question of glorifying not man but God. A work was needed for the glorification of Him Who gave His life for His friends : John 15 : 13. On the basis of this knowledge, the founder—Josef Schmid—gave his work of Bible distribution the name : " Freundes Dienst ".

In December, 1951, at the Geneva Bible House, he bought a large number of Gospels for distribution. He had scarcely gone a few kilometres from Geneva when, in the quietness, he calculated the cost of these Gospels and discovered with horror that his money was insufficient to pay the bill which would soon reach him. In his distress he asked God for forgiveness for his lack of foresight and begged for His help. God answered in a wonderful way. On the following day his sister explained to him over the phone that a minister had handed her a bank-note with the comment that it was to be used for the free distribution of the Gospel. The value of the note was so high that it met the whole bill.

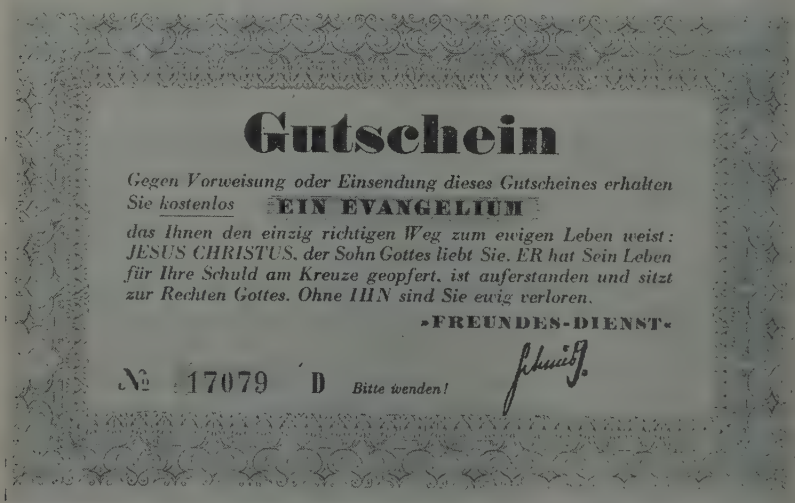
Was not that a sign from God that everything can be expected in answer to prayer ? This first gift of money was an indication of how God wished to finance the Freundes Dienst. This Service made a point of not collecting money. The purchase of Gospels always took place *before* having the necessary money in hand. God knew the needs and guided people to send as much money as was needed. Thus the promise was again fulfilled : " He that is our God is the God of salvation ; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." (Psalm 68 : 20)

In order to reach many who were seekers, the founder of the movement had coupons printed, which in appearance were like bank-notes. These coupons are distributed everywhere where people meet together : in the street, in railway carriages, at work, in hospitals, in prisons, etc. The recipient can send in the coupon and in exchange receive a free copy of the Gospel of John. Many people make use of this offer ; about 10% of the coupons distributed are made use of in this way. Within two years 25,000 Gospels were given away free. On the last page of the Gospel a slip is attached. On this the recipient can enter his address and send it to the Freundes Dienst with questions concerning the Christian faith.

New branches

The young tree soon acquired new branches. The Freundes Dienst was not satisfied with the distribution of John's Gospel alone ; it sought still further ways of serving people. A circle of young people gathered together for singing. On two Sundays in the month this group goes through the town of St. Gallen, sings hymns in some of the squares and then distributes tracts. In this way the "street mission" of the Freundes Dienst came about. Hospitals and prisons are also visited. In the light of Matthew 9 : 35, a Bible stand was also set up. Here Bibles and Portions are offered in the St. Gallen market which takes place twice a year, for periods of ten days, in spring and autumn. Tracts and coupons are also given away. The leaders of the movement are more and more being called to give evangelising lectures and in this way Bible distribution is linked up with oral witness.

The latest branch of the young tree is the Bible correspondence course. Since the beginning of 1955 Josef Schmid has been sending out lesson-sheets. The written answers are sent to the Freundes Dienst for correction. This constitutes a simple way of giving a helping hand to the stumbling beginner in Bible reading, so that he understands what he reads (Acts 8 : 30).



Gutschein

Gegen Vorweisung oder Einsendung dieses Gutscheines erhalten Sie kostenlos **EIN EVANGELIUM**

das Ihnen den einzig richtigen Weg zum ewigen Leben weist: JESUS CHRISTUS, der Sohn Gottes liebt Sie. ER hat Sein Leben für Ihre Schuld am Kreuze geopfert, ist auferstanden und sitzt zur Rechten Gottes. Ohne IHN sind Sie ewig verloren.

»FREUNDES-DIENST«

№ 17079 D *Bitte wenden!*

THE TEXT GIVEN ABOVE IS A REPRODUCTION OF THE TWO SII
FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN AND DUTCH. AN ENGLISH VERS

Among the new branches of this movement are the centres abroad. It is astonishing how, from the St. Gallen centre, in quick succession from 1951-1955 it was possible to form links in other European countries, and even as far as North Africa. To-day such centres exist in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, England, Ireland, Tunis, Morocco and Algiers. The coupons are therefore printed also in the English, French and Italian languages. The circle of helpers in the distribution of the coupons is growing all the time. These are the faithful Christians who have accepted the statutes of the Freundes Dienst, from which we quote the following points :

> The Freundes Dienst has received its commission for missionary service from its Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. In obedience to the divine Commander it seeks to fulfil its missionary command according to Matthew 28 : 18-20.
>
> The Freundes Dienst would like to carry out its mission above all through the free distribution of the Gospel. It will in this way encourage the reading of God's Word and so undergird and complete the preaching of the Word as carried out by the Landeskirche and the Free Churches. The Freundes Dienst can also, according to God's guidance, join with other branches which are serving to proclaim and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. The missionary work should, however, remain the principal aim.
>
> The necessary funds for the Freundes Dienst are not procured through public collections and membership subscriptions, but should be requested from God through prayer, trusting in His power and help.
>
> The pursuit of commercial ends or financial profit is excluded.
>
> The Freundes Dienst is grounded in Christian co-operation, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures (John 15 ; John 17 : 21).

Liebe Gutschein-Besitzerin ! *Lieber Gutschein-Besitzer* !

Diesen Gutschein (gültig nur solange Vorrat) können Sie persönlich vorweisen oder an eine der untenstehenden Adressen senden. Denjenigen, die Rückporto beilegen, danken wir im voraus.

Wenn Sie schon eine Bibel besitzen, lesen Sie bitte betend : Jes. **53**, 4—6 ; Joh. **1**, 12—14 ; **3**, 5 ; **11**, 25—26 ; **14**, 6 ; **19**, 30 ; **20**, 24—29 ; Apg. **4**, 12 ; 1. Joh. **1**, 7 ; Josua **24**, 15.

Wenn Sie Schwierigkeiten haben, so helfen wir Ihnen gerne.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

FREUNDES - DIENST ST. GALLEN

F D

Holstenwall 20	Buchenhofener-Str. 23/25	Poststr. 14	
Hamburg 36 (Deutschland)	**Wuppertal-Vohwinkel** (Deutschland)	**St. Gallen** (Schweiz)	**Goisern 150** (Oesterreich)

Vorname : ..... Name : .....

Strafie : ..... Wohnort : .....

Beruf : ..... Staat : .....

Bitte in Blockschrift schreiben.

OUPON REFERRED TO IN THIS ARTICLE. IT IS PRODUCED IN BEING PREPARED.

Collaborators in the Freundes Dienst can only be those who place their whole life under Jesus Christ and acknowledge every point in the Scriptures as divine truth.

The tree by the rivers of water (Psalm 1 : 3)

The Freundes Dienst began like a grain of mustard seed. What is the secret of this young tree in God's Kingdom being able to grow so quickly and to bear already ripe fruit on its branches? The secret is threefold :

1. The Freundes Dienst is founded on God's Word and possesses a clear, unmistakable foundation in the Christian faith as revealed in the Holy Scriptures which are " God's given (inspired) Word," and which are " our highest authority in all our questions of faith and life."

2. Supporting the Freundes Dienst is a faithful prayer circle. Intercession determines the strength of the work in every Christian mission. Where there is no intercession, there is no life and there no souls are saved. The Freundes Dienst therefore produces a circular letter nearly six times a year, in order to orientate its helpers regarding the development of the movement, but it also sends out regularly prayer letters to Christians who have undertaken to engage in regular intercession.

3. The activity of the Freundes Dienst stands and falls according to the spiritual strength of the groups of which it is composed. The coupons are included in leaflets and so are passed on further. The leaflet distribution service and the Freundes Dienst are two sister bodies which never quarrel and are never jealous of one another! But the distribution of coupons and tracts is always a confession of faith to the world. Here also is involved a willingness to bear the shame of Christ.

The Freundes Dienst is the youngest tree in the great kingdom of Bible distribution. It is eager to help mankind to recognise God's Son as Saviour and become His people. As long as the young tree stands by the rivers of water it will grow and bring forth its fruit to the glory of Him Who was crucified, Who rose from the dead and Who will return again.

THE B.F.B.S. AT WORK IN NORTH AFRICA

by L. R. Stedeford

A RELIC of St. Augustine at Bône and the ruins of great churches—these and their memories are the sole sad remainder of the once flourishing Christian community in North Africa. That early Church fell before the rising crescent of Islam, and for over a century the disciples of to-day, envoys of a different, western civilisation, have struggled to raise up a new Church among the native populations of this north-west corner of Africa.

As in all Muslim countries, this task has been hard, and since North Africa flashed into the world's headlines a year or two ago it has become harder. Any account of the work of the Bible Society—as of anything else—must now begin with the political situation, for it is the political future of these territories that forms the great question mark that hangs over all.

Following negotiations between the French Government and representatives of the Tunisian Nationalists, Tunisia now has an entirely native Govern-

ment with autonomy in internal affairs, and the French Resident General has become a High Commissioner. The terrorism that was active in country districts before these agreements were made seems now to have ceased, but there are already ominous signs of a split among the Nationalists themselves. In spite of financial assistance from France, the economic situation is serious, the unemployment rate is something like one in seven of the population, and food riots have been reported recently in several places. The Bible Society's colporteur at Tunis is able to continue working without any hindrance, but finds that the poverty of so many of the people is beginning to have an effect on his sales. The Bible stand at the annual Industrial Fair at Tunis gives very satisfactory sales, particularly in Arabic.

It is just over a year since violence struck Algeria and calm fled overnight before uncertainty and fear. Fighting was fierce in the Aurès, a primitive mountainous area of the south east, and when order was re-established there, the trouble spread further north, and continues with varying intensity in most of the eastern part of the country. Buses and other vehicles are attacked, crops burnt, and farm animals slaughtered. All night trains are suspended and road traffic permitted only to those in possession of a pass. In certain towns a curfew has been imposed. In the Algiers area and to the west, the incidents have until now been less frequent.

In spite of the anxieties and uncertainties of this situation, Bible Society and mission work continue. The chief hindrance from the Bible Society point of view arises from the restriction on travelling. In a country such as this, where much of the colportage programme is carried out by means of a Bible Van, and where colportage is a major channel of distribution, the limitation of possible colportage areas is likely eventually to affect circulation, although this has not occurred yet. Caution is required, both in planning the van's itinerary and in the carrying out of the programme planned. One frustrating element of the situation appears when it is found that for the first time for several years conditions in Tunisia seem to permit a tour in that country, but conditions in eastern Algeria prevent the van from making the journey from Algiers to Tunis.

It is difficult to gauge to what extent the changed mood of a people affects Bible Society work. That it does so is certain. The nationalist movement in Algeria has not so far taken on a noticeably anti-Christian character, except insofar as Christianity is associated with colonialism or Judaism. It is perhaps fair to say that the Muslim's traditional prejudices are brought nearer the surface of his being by the present tension, and it is this, rather than any pronounced change of attitude, which imposes a certain caution in one's approach to them.

In Algeria as in other countries, terrorism has its deplorable effect on the economy of the country, and the present slowing down of commerce seems likely to become increasingly evident. Here the problem is made more acute by the fact that there are no recognised nationalist political parties as in Tunisia and Morocco, with the result that there are no native authorities with whom the French Government can negotiate. Here, too, the French colonists have transformed the malarial, hostile country which they found 120 years ago, into a most fertile coastal belt some 200 miles wide between the desert and the sea which now glows with wheat fields, vineyards, orange plantations and olive groves. Many of these farmers and their families have

been born and grown up in the country, and it is not surprising if, knowing no other home, they are reluctant to leave. Some 22 million of the inhabitants of these three territories are French, and since this represents some 10% of the total population, the French Government points out with justice that it cannot be expected to adopt a policy of abandonment in Algeria, and that the situation cannot be compared for example with that of the British in India, where the white population was very much smaller in proportion to the whole.

It is in Morocco that the meeting of the two cultures is perhaps most pronounced, for here, apart from the unchanged life of the countryside, there remain the magnificent old Moorish cities in which the tiny, narrow streets, seething with people and animals, squalid and yet strangely beautiful, crouch still behind the mighty battlements that protected them in other more dangerous days. And right beside these ancient towns have arisen shining new blocks of white concrete, a dozen or more storeys high, flanking broad, tree-lined boulevards in which huge American cars glide to and fro. Morocco, one feels, is a country of great potentialities, and it is evident that France and other western nations have put a great deal of capital into it. The problem of the Throne seems at last to have been settled and it is hoped that this will help to stop the bloodshed that has afflicted Casablanca and other cities for several years past. This is particularly significant due to the fact that in the eyes of the Moroccans the Sultan has not only political but religious authority ; it is in his name that the prayers are said in the Mosques every Friday, and therefore when the Sultan was deposed, not only were the political aspirations of the people thwarted, but their religious sentiments were offended, and this gave a depth and impetus to the ensuing troubles that perhaps nothing else would have provided.

Bible Society activity in Morocco has been restricted for some years past by the ban on open air evangelism, which forbids colportage among the Muslim population, and in the Spanish Zone forbids any colportage at all. Thus the only means of distribution are through the missions and the depot of the Geneva " Maison de la Bible " in Casablanca, and although some 17,000 copies of the Scriptures are sold annually by these means there is no doubt that this figure could be much increased if there were complete freedom of working. Nevertheless colporteurs frequently visit the country for work among the European population and results are usually good.

In view of the circumstances outlined above, it is a matter for gratitude that for the year ending October 31, 1955, we can report an increase of 8,000 in circulation over the total for the previous year, the total being over 57,000 for the whole of North Africa. The North Africa Agency also includes the independent Moslem State of Libya, but here too for the time being colportage is limited to the European population only, and sales are therefore very small.

Translation work is being continued, and progress is being made towards the completion of the New Testament in the colloquial Arabic of Algeria and Tunisia, and the continuation of the Old Testament in the colloquial Arabic of Morocco. The New Testament in Kabyle is being revised. The printing and publication of books in Arabic is likely to be stimulated by the greater recognition recently given by the Government to the Arabic language and the extension of the arrangements for teaching it. An Association formed largely by Protestant missions is active in promoting the teaching of illiterates by the Laubach method, but the recent governmental reforms in this sphere may eventually have greater effect and prove of very great significance for all Bible Society work in this area.

Africa (East)

The Rev. Frank Bedford, B.F.B.S. secretary for East Africa, addressed the All African Lutheran Conference which met in November in Tanganyika. The delegates present, numbering well over 150, represented Lutheran churches from all parts of Africa, which have a membership of over one million. Mr. Bedford first spoke about the work of the Bible Societies in Africa :

" Out of a total of nearly twelve hundred languages into which the Scriptures have now been translated for the whole world, Africa has received God's Word in about four hundred. One glorious testimony to the growth of the Christian Church in this continent is that to-day one in three of the languages possessing Scriptures is an African one. The story of the Church in Africa has been the story of the Bible in a very unique sense and we thank God for the triumphs of the past.

" Let us be sure that such a record does not make us complacent. There are still only 34 complete Bibles in African languages and complete New Testaments in 70 additional languages. The vast majority of our Scriptures for Africa consist of Gospel portions, in many cases only a single Gospel. A great unfinished task still awaits us. There are still a number of tribes in Africa numbering more than one million people each who only have the Gospel of Mark . . . ."

But the Bible Societies cannot alone meet such a challenge and Mr. Bedford spent most of his address calling upon the representatives of the churches for effective co-operation in the translation and revision of the text of the Bible and in the distribution of the Scriptures, through colportage (full-time and voluntary) and through mobile units and travelling book shops :

" If the Bible is to become more vivid in the mother tongue it can only be achieved if Africans take their full share in the task of translation . . . . . Is it not time that we knew from every country what the Church thinks about the quality of the translations which are being distributed ? Can you also decide, and pass on the information, as to which languages in your area need a complete Bible, which a New Testament and which can be served by a single Gospel. There is a great need for this vital information and the Church must co-operate in supplying it . . . . .

" In every copy of the Scriptures we distribute, there should be at least one attractively printed and illustrated pamphlet describing clearly the stages of Bible reading. Clear and definite instruction should be given in the best methods of reading a difficult book. We owe this to our people, and it is time that every Church should set aside one man who can make the preparation of such helps a prior claim on his time . . . .

" We have reached a new stage in this country in the life of the Church and it may well be that the next big advance of Christianity in this continent will depend upon a concerted drive on the part of the Church to spread the Word of God in printed form. If we are to make a new advance I am convinced by long experience in the Rhodesias and in all the East African territories, that it can only come by the Church itself, and all its individual members, taking this matter to heart. We must be prepared to pray for guidance and then within the Councils of the Church to discuss most earnestly practical methods of distribution to meet the new age.

"In many parts of Africa the Church is beginning to take a real part in making substantial gifts that the work of Bible preparation and distribution can continue, but up to the present the majority of people do not know that as Christians they must share in the expense of this Christian work .... We are called to spread the Bible. Let us hope that this conference will send us back to our own churches with a new determination to put this Book, with its message of redeeming grace, into the hands of every African who can read."

Africa (West)

The Rev. E. M. Roulet, the new B.F.B.S. secretary for French West Africa, has just concluded a first round trip in Senegal and Guinea. His reports indicate that there is still a huge field open there for pioneer Bible Society work.

"My first visit was to *Casamance,*" writes Mr. Roulet, "a large province of Senegal, which lies sandwiched between Portuguese Guinea to the south and British Gambia to the north, through which flows the Casamance river. I stayed two days in Ziguinchor, a cosmopolitan town of 20,000 people and the administrative centre of that province. It is also the headquarters of the World-wide Evangelisation Crusade, the only Protestant mission in Casamance, which began work in 1938 at Kounkanne. Three other stations have been opened since then to reach the 350,000 people in its area. Three of its stations are in predominantly Mohammedan areas where Fula (100,000), Malinka (68,000) and Wolof are the main Mohammedan tribes. As may be expected in any Mohammedan work, the results have been very meagre.

"The majority of the missionaries have but recently come to the field, so that practically no translation work is being done. A grammar in the Fulacunda language has been made to help new missionaries in learning the language, and passages depicting the life of our Lord have been translated from the Gospel narrative, as well as the Scripture Gift Mission booklet "The Way of Salvation." There is very little demand for either of these two books as the people are still largely illiterate. The Mohammedan religion in this province, as indeed most other areas of French West Africa, is forging ahead, ever tightening its grip on its followers and making it increasingly difficult for a man to confess Christ openly.

"The Christian Literature Crusade which is part of the W.E.C., has recently opened a small bookshop in the market place of Ziguinchor in a building rented from an African. It is well-stocked with Scriptures in French and in some vernaculars, and with French evangelical literature. The single lady in charge keeps the shop open in the evenings as well as throughout the day. She reports quite an encouraging sale of literature, mostly in French ...."

In *Dakar*, with a population of 350,000, Mr. Roulet could only find two bookshops selling Scriptures: these were Roman Catholic Bibles, the cheapest of which was selling at 29/-. Apparently, one of the two missionaries of the Société des Missions de Paris, for the moment on furlough, also has a small depot of Scriptures. Four French booksellers have now agreed to stock Scriptures.

In *French Guinea* the situation is different in that among some of the tribes literacy is very high. Mr. Roulet paid a visit to missionaries of the Christian and Missionary Alliance working in Labé, in the heart of the Futa-Djalon country, and reports:

"The Watkins (a missionary couple there) have laboured for 32 years among the half-million Moham-

medan Fula of the Futa-Djalon, and have seen only a handful of them accepting the Lord. This has enabled them to concentrate on translation work, and it was gratifying to learn that the whole Bible has been translated into Fula, using the Arabic script. The reason for using Arabic script is that over 90% of the male population can read these characters. This must surely be the highest rate of literacy in Africa for the corresponding sex. What a wonderful opportunity of reaching these people with the written Word! The Gospel of Matthew was published by us in 1929. Only a few copies remain. The Four Gospels, Acts and Romans have been carefully copied out by a scribe and checked, and are ready for publication.

"Although the work has been so difficult during these many years, there is a future and an optimism there which is lacking in other Mohammedan areas which I visited, due I am sure to the fact that the people have available the written Word in a form which they can read. So many translations are made for predominantly Mohammedan peoples (e.g. Malinka, Susu, Wolof, Fula-cunda) in the Roman script which very few can read. The reason for this is that Scriptures have been primarily translated for the Christian community for instruction rather than for the evangelisation of the unsaved. Moreover it takes far more time and effort to prepare a manuscript in Arabic characters than in Roman, and very few missionaries have either the time or the desire to undertake such laborious work. The experience of the missionaries in the Futa-Djalon is that African Mohammedans are as keen to buy literature which is written in a form that they can read, as any pagan or Christian community. Scripture is very often the only literature available in their language, for while Arabic books exist, they are for the most part too difficult to understand for the average reader.

" The optimism that exists at Labé for the future of the work is reflected in the beautiful church which is being built in faith that, as the Lord has miraculously supplied the funds to erect the building, so He will provide the congregation to fill it, to the glory of His name! "

Commenting further on his visit to the Malinka group, another stronghold of Islam, Mr. Roulet adds: " Once again I was challenged by the need for translations that already exist in various vernaculars in Roman script, to be prepared in Arabic script in order to reach those literate Mohammedans with the Gospel message.

" I return from this first tour somewhat depressed in spirit by the extent of Mohammedanism and by the comparative ineffectiveness of the work of existing missions in winning Mohammedans for the Lord Jesus Christ. The only hope of remedying this challenging situation is to publish Scriptures in a writing the people can read, for as these Scriptures remind us: " The entrance of thy words giveth light."

Mr. Roulet is now paying an extensive visit to missionary work in Dahomey and Togoland.

America (Central)

The Central America Agency during the past ten years has witnessed a constant increase in the circulation of Scriptures. The total per year almost doubled from 1945-1949, and more than doubled again from 1949-1953.

Year	Bibles	Testaments	Portions	Totals	Percentage increase
1945	11,862	16,316	66,007	94,185	-
1949	13,972	14,690	159,322	187,984	99.5
1954	22,168	23,512	386,512	432,192	130.

Circulation during the last ten years has amounted to 173,495 Bibles, 179,507 Testaments, 1,980,171 Portions, making a total of 2,337,173 copies.

In March, 1955, the total agency distribution passed the 6,000,000 mark, since the founding of the agency in 1892 by Francisco G. Penzotti, renowned Bible distributor in Latin America. Prior to that the people of Central America scarcely knew the Bible. Last year alone one volume for each 22 inhabitants was provided.

Argentina

Circulation in Argentina has again gone up above the level of the previous year. For 1955 it is as follows : Bibles 61,950, New Testaments 52,489, Portions 1,009,636, making a total of 1,124,075. This represents a total increase of about 10% over 1954. It represents the circulation for Argentina alone and is extremely encouraging, considering the fact that since mid-June, 1955, the situation throughout the country was anything but normal.

Local support also shows a marked increase over 1954, reaching a new total of close on 150,000 Argentine pesos, which is 25% higher than the contributions and gifts received during 1954.

■

Dr. Charles Turner[1], the B.F.B.S. agent in Argentina, also writes : During the month of October (1955) it was a great pleasure to have Dr. Norman J. Cockburn, General Secretary of the B.F.B.S. here visiting our field. Despite the fact that he reached Buenos Aires only a couple of weeks after the successful revolutionary outbreak, he was able to carry out a lengthy schedule of visitation and speaking engagements. During his visit to Argentina Dr. Cockburn was able to participate in the ceremony of dedication of the new and extremely central Bible Society quarters in the Galeria Rosario, situated in a new arcade running through the centre of a block of buildings in the city of Rosario. The Bible Society committee in that city also participated in the ceremony and Dr. Cockburn delivered the dedicatory prayer.

■

The Buenos Aires Bible House is almost completed. This eight-floor building will be the headquarters of Bible Society work in the River Plate region, from which the activities of the Bible Societies throughout the area will be directed. It is hoped that the inauguration of the Bible House will take place in one of the early weeks of the New Year 1956.

■

One of the latest ventures undertaken in Argentina is the naming of an honorary representative of Bible Society interests in each local church in the country. As the name suggests this person will have the responsibility, in co-operation with the pastor, of informing the congregation of his church concerning matters of interest regarding the Bible Society and the plans related to the different phases of its activity, as well as of inspiring the congregation to help meet the spiritual and material needs of the Bible Society through prayer and the raising of funds for the work.

So far, six months after launching this new venture, the response has been very encouraging and about 250 churches of different denominations have sent in the names of a responsible person who in each of these churches will freely devote time and effort towards furthering our cause. In practically every case, it is of interest to note, the representative of Bible Society interests is not the local pastor but a lay person.

[1] See page 48.

Supplement of pictures

taken at

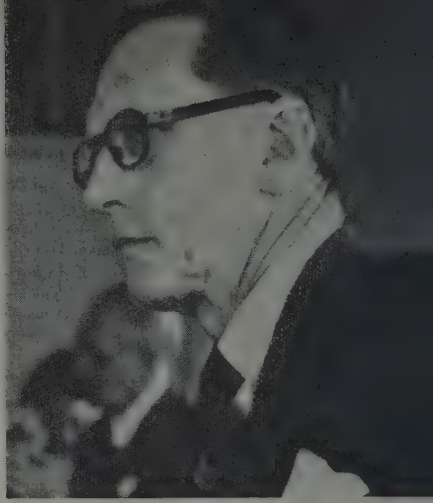
U.B.S. REGIONAL CONFERENCE

held at Boldern, Switzerland

SEPTEMBER 4-8, 1955

The conference was attended by eighty Bible Society representatives of whom thirty-five were from Switzerland, the remainder coming from seventeen other countries. The main themes of the conference were : The Task of the Bible Society in the Present-day World, and The Relationship between Bible Societies and Churches.

Most of the delegates to the conference are shown in this picture.



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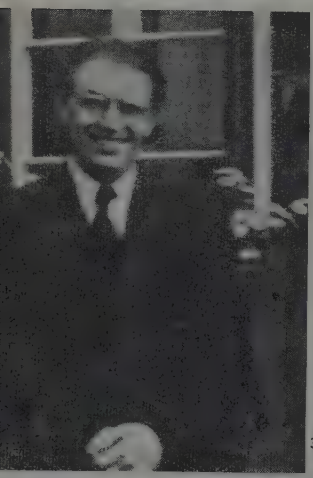

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1. Bishop E. Berggrav (Norway) President of the U.B.S., relaxes between sessions with Dean P. Otzen, representing the Danish Bible Society.

2. The Rev. Dr. W. J. Platt, Chairman of the U.B.S. and General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

3. Professor Dr. I. Kadar, General Secretary of the Hungarian Bible Council.

4. The tea break, showing the Rev. Dr. W. J. Platt, left, with The Rev. Alf Hauge, General Secretary of the Norwegian Bible Society and the Rev. R. Steiner, Chairman of the Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany. In the background is an exhibition of posters produced by various Bible Societies.

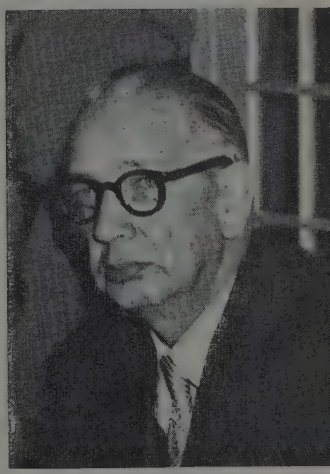
5

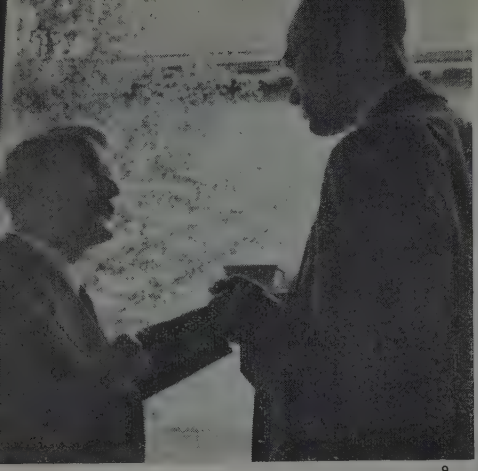
5. The Rev. O. Naegeli (right), General Secretary of the re-constituted Swiss Bible Society, who was responsible for the local arrangements, with Monsieur O. Béguin, General Secretary of the U.B.S.

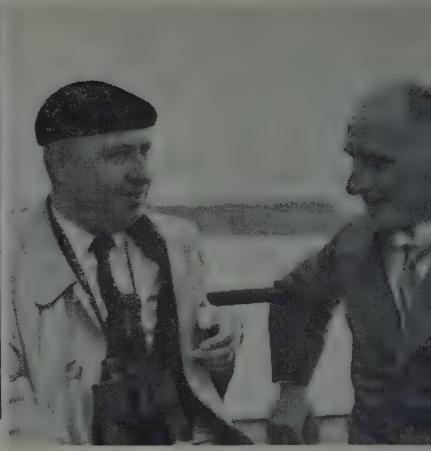
6. The Rt. Rev. Archbishop I. Salomies (centre) of Finland, newly appointed Vice-President of the U.B.S., with his wife (on his left) and the Rev. M. L. Parvio, General Secretary of the Finnish Bible Society and his wife (extreme right).

7. Dean O. Nystedt, General Secretary of the Swedish Bible Society.

8. Representatives of the Low Countries—Baron F. L. S. F. van Tuyll van Serooskerken (right), General Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society, with the Rev. W. Ganzevoort (Belgium) and the Rev. P. Caufriez, General Secretary of the Belgian Bible Society (left).







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9. The Rev. P. A. Collyer (right), one of the Secretaries of the American Bible Society, chatting with Prelate D.Th. Schlatter of the Stuttgart Bible Society.

10. Rev. R. Vollenweider (right), former President of the Federation of Swiss Bible Societies, with the Rev. Dr. O. Söhngen, Chairman of the Evang. Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft and of the von Canstein Bibelanstalt in Berlin—snapped during the excursion on the lake of Zürich.

11. Monsieur J. Blumenthal (left), General Secretary of the Alliance biblique française, with the Rev. T. Hawthorn, Agent in Johannesburg of the B.F.B.S. in South Africa.

12. Herr K. Uhl (right), Secretary of the Austrian Bible Committee with his colleague Herr R. Marsak.

13. The Rev. Dr. K. Zabel (left), Secretary of Bibelwerk, the federation of Bible Societies in eastern Germany, with the Rev. P. Kreiselmaier, Secretary of the Pfälzer Bibelverein, Germany.

Australia

The one-millionth migrant to enter Australia since the end of the second world war has now arrived. This means that one person in ten in Australia to-day has come to the country since 1945. This influx has also led to an increasing number of naturalisations, and it is expected that during 1956 there will be a total of 50,000 New Australians who become naturalised citizens.

The B.F.B.S. in Australia is co-operating with the local government authorities and is arranging for the provision of Bibles to all those of non-British nationality who become naturalised. In most cases the local government authorities are bearing a substantial portion of the cost. These New Australians take their Oath of Allegiance holding a copy of the Bible in their hands. After the ceremony they are advised that if they so wish they may retain the Bible upon which they made this Oath. Up to the present about 97% of the new migrants exercise this first choice in favour of retaining the Scriptures. The Bible Society in Australia feels that this is an important emphasis upon the value of Holy Scripture in private as well as in national life.

*

The Rev. Canon H. M. Arrowsmith left Australia in mid-November for an extended deputation tour in Ceylon, India and Pakistan, on behalf of the B.S.I.P.C. Canon Arrowsmith plans to be back in Australia towards the end of February.

Austria

The Rev. R. Steiner, chairman of the Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany, addressed the annual meeting of the *Austrian Bible Committee* last September in Vienna. He also spoke before large audiences at Bible Society meetings organised in the main cities of Austria.

"The situation in Austria seems to be the same as in Germany," writes Pastor Steiner. "When the pastors take an interest in the circulation of Scriptures, then the church members are also ready to co-operate. But unfortunately pastors are too often indifferent and have no particular concern for the work. In Salzburg a deaconess chaired the meeting along with the pastor. Her contribution was the best I heard from any chairman during my tour.

"I have also gained a high opinion of the colporteurs working in Austria. I was particularly impressed by the eager enthusiasm of the two younger ones and their extraordinary gift for speaking with simple people and making the Bible loved and valued by them. I learned a great deal from their work and was amazed to see how many Bibles, Testaments and Gospels they circulate each year. I hope that the youngest of them will be able to come to Germany next year, and tell our young people and church groups of his activity."

*

The Austrian Bible Committee decided at its last meeting to increase its membership and to have a wider national representation by appointing members, lay people and clergy, from outside Vienna. All the churches will continue to be represented on the Committee. At the same time, an executive committee will be formed which will deal with business arising between meetings of the whole body.

Belgium

The *Belgian Bible Society* commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Gutenberg Bible by organising a ten-day Bible exhibition in the Art Gallery exhibition hall in Brussels, and a public meeting in the large conference hall of the same Gallery. Both events were held under the high patronage of H.M. Queen Elisabeth,

grandmother of the present king. In the sponsoring committee were several ministers of the present government. An original copy of the Gutenberg Bible and several other valuable manuscripts were on exhibit, as well as early printed Bibles lent by various Belgian institutions. Queen Elisabeth herself paid a long visit to the exhibition, which was visited by over eight thousand pepole.

At the public meeting, for which over six hundred people were unable to secure seats, Professor H. Brugmans, rector of the College of Europe in Bruges, spoke in Flemish on "The Bible in European Culture." Professor J. Cadier of the theological faculty of Montpellier, addressed the gathering in French on "The Bible, the Book of God's Presence." Professor Brugman's talk was, for the most part, historical and described the part played by the Bible in the life and cultural history of Europe from the Middle Ages until to-day. Turning to present times, the speaker gave a striking description of the spiritual deadlock in which European culture has imprisoned itself in recent decades. Philosophical anthropology and metaphysics have led nowhere. Yet modern man is conscious of his "emptiness" and enquires about the meaning of his life to-day. European culture has also lost much of its pride and its illusions. That is why the message of the Bible can, with renewed strength, bring to modern man to-day the answer to his questions.

Following this analysis, the message of Professor Cadier made even more topical and real the last contention of Professor Brugmans. The Bible is no philosophical or scientific book, but is the book which witnesses to God's presence and action. God is in His Word and when man opens the Bible, he finds himself in the Lord's presence.

Daily newspapers reporting on the exhibition, claimed it to be the most interesting cultural event of the year. The exhibition was shown on the two news T.V. programmes (Flemish and French) and Pastor Caufriez was asked to introduce and comment on it on the French-speaking programme. Interviews also took place on sound programmes. The Belgian Bible Society had given publicity to the manifestation by means of posters, large and small, news releases in the press and publicity penants on taxi-cabs.

Books to the value of Belgian Frs. 10,000 were sold and sales at the Society's headquarters have shown a net increase in the last few weeks.

Commenting on these celebrations, Mr. Jean Blumenthal, secretary of the French Bible Committee, writes : "These Brussels' manifestations met with complete success, and must have been most encouraging for Mr. Caufriez, the secretary of the Belgian Bible Society, who put a lot of work into their preparation. This success strengthens greatly the position of the Belgian Bible Society and of the Belgian evangelical churches as a whole. When one considers that twenty-five years ago, a Protestant could hardly show himself in the open in Belgium and that to-day such manifestations can be organised under the patronage of Queen Elisabeth with the official participation of several ministers, one can see what a change has taken place in Belgium."

Borneo (North)

North Borneo has recently been visited by Mr. Ian Morrison of the B.F.B.S. - N.B.S.S. Malaya Joint Agency. From an informative report, of which the BULLETIN hopes to publish larger extracts in the next issue, we quote the following conclusions :

(1) There is the urgent need of publishing the Scriptures as soon as possible in the languages of the tribes that have become Christian. If the

church among these people is to be consolidated, strengthened and made permanent, they must have the Bible in their own languages. If the evangelical zeal already there and reaching out to other tribes is to be maintained, they must have the Word of God in their own hands and in their own speech. History sounds a warning and a challenge concerning these things and we do well to give heed to both.

(2) If it should be argued that Scriptures in the trade language (Malay) could be used among the tribes, the answer is that most of them do not know it : they live so far from the coast that they do not hear it, and there is no likelihood of its becoming the 'lingua franca' of the interior for many years to come. This can be appreciated when we realise that large numbers of the tribes-people live from 5 to 14 days' walk from the coast, and that, traditionally they have rather looked down on the Malays and their culture.

(3) Colportage among the Ibans. I had hoped that the time might have come to help in the evangelisation of the Ibans through colportage, but literacy is still so low among them that apparently the effort would not be fruitful. Methodist, S.P.G. and other schools are remedying this situation, but far too few pupils return to help their own people, preferring to remain in the large towns in government or other employment.

Brazil

Open-air celebrations of the last Bible Sunday in Recife were attended by an estimated crowd of over 30,000 people. All denominations were represented ; the choir itself counted about 1,200 voices. It is only two years ago that the Rev. J. V. de Paina was appointed district secretary for that part of Brazil.

Canada

A brief report prepared by Dr. O'Neil on the accomplishments of the *British and Foreign Bible Society in Canada* since the beginning of Bible Society work in that country, reveals the following highlights :

In the last 151 years approximately 20 million Bibles, Testaments and Scripture portions have been distributed in this country, many of them free of charge when the situation warranted it. These volumes have been printed in 110 different languages, of which 21 were Indian and Eskimo dialects. There is hardly a year in which our Society does not circulate Scriptures in more than 70 languages.

Since the beginning of World War I over 1,316,000 New Testaments and Bibles have been presented to the personnel of the army, navy and air force. Since organised work began at ports of entry in 1908, more than 1,524,000 Scripture portions (usually diglot Gospels in their mother tongue and English) have been presented to immigrants arriving at our shores. In 1955 the policy was initiated of offering English Bibles to those who had just been granted citizenship in the various courts across the land.

The first volumes in embossed type for the blind of Canada were sent to this country by the parent Society in 1838. Thousands of books in Moon and Braille have been distributed since that time, either free or at a greatly reduced price. At present Braille volumes are made available to blind individuals for 25 cents each, only a tenth of their cost. The distribution of Talking Book Records of the Bible is subsidized also, so that the blind may purchase them for 25 cents per record.

Thousands of Bibles have been given to poor families on the recommendation of a clergyman or minister, and the Auxiliaries across Canada

welcome the opportunity of making sure that any home which cannot buy a Bible receives one free.

The General Secretary has just returned from a visit to the six Auxiliaries in Western Canada. Earlier in the year he paid similar visits to the other ten Auxiliaries. As he returns from meeting the people in many urban and rural communities he is convinced that the Christians of Canada are becoming increasingly aware of the two vital problems confronting the Bible Society : (1) Progress in translations so that eventually the Bible may be available in every man's language ; (2) An increase in circulation to keep pace with literacy and take care of the needs of the 15 million new adult readers every year. In addition to exceeding the objective for the Third Jubilee Thank-offering Fund, Canada is now sending overseas $60,000 more per year for general work than was being sent three years ago, that is to say, an increase of about 20%. Moreover there is a growing sense of the importance of personal Bible study for which we are truly thankful.

Chile

Referring to the statements made at a Bible Society meeting about Scripture circulation within the area covered by this agency, a Roman Catholic priest responded with a public statement appealing to his church to make a good edition of the Bible available at low cost, to counteract the evangelical influence. "We must remember that our church's three great enemies—communism, Freemasonry and Protestantism—are well organised and able to scatter about abundant literature" he said. "To defend ourselves from Protestantism . . . . we should print around 500,000 Bibles to be sold at a very low price. Of course this would be too many for our own use in Chile, but we could export copies to other countries in South America. This must be done soon, or the Protestants will flood Chile with their Bibles . . . . We urgently need to organise a society with strong financial backing, which we might solicit from Catholics in the United States, and thus match the Protestants in the sale of the Bible."

China

Reports have appeared in the press of the extensive visit paid to China last autumn by a Quaker delegation from Great Britain. The visitors had an opportunity of meeting leaders of the China Bible House and of seeing evidence that Bible work is still going on to some extent in that country. During the past five years three editions of the Bible have been published in Shanghai, in three different sizes. One of these was a pocket edition, of which 3,000 copies were printed. Over 6,000 Bibles were circulated during 1954, though it was not clear to the delegation whether this covered the whole country or only one region. The Bible Society employs a staff of twenty-one, and a new board of seventeen directors has recently taken charge of the work, two members of the previous board having been re-elected.

The visitors also reported the notable increase of interest in the reading and study of the Scripture in Chinese churches and Christian organisations. Preaching in the churches is based on the Bible in a way unknown in the past history of the Chinese churches.

Colombia

The evangelical churches of Colombia are this year celebrating the centennial of the arrival of the first evangelical workers in the country. At the request of the Confederation of Evangelical Churches in Colombia an edition of 20,000 New Testaments in Spanish has been produced to commemorate the event, with a

special inscription on the cover. A fly-leaf prepared by the Confederation is also to be included in the volume, bearing a picture of the Colombian flag, a statement regarding evangelical work during the past one hundred years and a quotation from the Gospel of John : "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The books are being sold by the Agency at a special 50% discount.

Egypt

The new colportage motor launch, the 'Mary Jones,' was dedicated in Port Said on 27th September last. The old launch, which had plied the waters of Port Said harbour for many years, had been crushed beyond repair by a liner. Only the engine had been salvaged. Secretary James Roe's nine-year-old daughter, dressed as Mary Jones, performed the 'christening' ceremony. Once again the harbour colporteur can visit the hundreds of ships that await their turn to go through the Suez Canal.

England

The *British and Foreign Bible Society* held its fourth annual laymen's conference last November, under the general heading : the Rediscovery of the Bible. It was attended by some seventy people of all the major denominations. Two papers were given dealing with the conception of the Covenant—the Bond between God and Man—as expressed in the Old and New Testaments, the unity of the Bible's teaching on this subject being underlined. A third lecture described the development of the Church as the people of the Covenant, during the first five centuries of the Christian era.

The Rev. Dr. W. J. Platt, General Secretary of the B.F.B.S. described the impact of the Bible on peoples and individuals in the modern world. Information about the work of the Bible Society was also given.

■

The B.F.B.S. last November issued a 32-page illustrated booklet on the story of the Christian movement among the Paiwan tribe of Formosa, by J. Whitehorn and E. Band (price one shilling). The Paiwan tribe lives in the South of Formosa and the Rev. J. Whitehorn has been engaged since 1951 in the task of reducing the language of that tribe to writing and in translating parts of the Scriptures into that language. This booklet is complementary to the story of the spread of Christianity among the tribes of the northern end of Formosa, which was published in 1950 under the title " He Brought Them Out."

■

On October 11, 1955, a luncheon took place at Cardiff to mark the publication of the Welsh Bible in the new orthography. The Bible in Welsh was translated in 1588 and it was almost entirely the work of one man, Bishop William Morgan. Except for slight revisions, the present edition is substantially the same. Since, however, there have been changes in Welsh orthography it was thought fit to bring this into line with current practice. Professor Henry Lewis, of the University College of Swansea, undertook the work of revision. The new Bible is especially designed for use in Sunday and day schools.

Over 3,000 copies of the new Welsh Bible were ordered prior to publication, and it has stimulated interest in the Welsh press and the Welsh section of the B.B.C.

France

Mr. Meurice, a travelling Bible salesman who for the past three years has been working half-time for the Belgian Bible Society and half-time

for the *Alliance biblique française,* reports orders for 1,237 volumes—over half of them complete Bibles—during his six months' period in France this year. Of the many bookshops visited in France by Mr. Meurice since he began his work, about 120 have started placing regular order for Scriptures and sales to booksellers have increased by over 2,000 Bibles and over 4,000 Testaments. Mr. Meurice, who is now working full-time in Belgium, has been replaced in France by a full-time salesman there.

■

The last issue for 1955 of the Revue de l'Evangélisation, a bimonthly periodical published by the Société centrale d'évangélisation—the evangelisation service of the French Reformed Church—is devoted to the subject of colportage. A number of the papers read and testimonies given at the colporteurs' conference at Amougies (see BULLETIN 24, p.34) are reproduced in an abbreviated form. This number was prepared by Monsieur J. Blumenthal, General Secretary of the Alliance biblique française and B.F.B.S. Agent in Paris. The Société centrale d'évangélisation is a member of the Alliance biblique française. This publication will help to spread among church members in France a better understanding of the aims and possibilities of Bible Society work and should serve to reinforce the interest already aroused by the French translation of Dr. A. M. Chirgwin's book, "The Bible in World Evangelism," which appeared last summer under the title "Et les sourds entendront."

*

A campaign for the development of voluntary colportage in the churches is being prepared. Pastors are to be invited to form teams of volunteers who undertake to devote several hours on Sundays or weekday evenings to colportage in the area of their parish or in neighbouring hamlets. They will be provided with Scriptures at special rates, and as far as possible an experienced colporteur will be made available to the churches to help them in starting off the teams. It is hoped that this project will meet with a favourable reception and will give to a certain number of lay people in the churches the opportunity of witnessing to their neighbours and thus strengthening them in their Christian vocation.

■

As a practical follow-up to one of the wishes expressed by the colporteurs' meeting in Amougies last September (see BULLETIN 24, p.34), a periodical for colporteurs, entitled "Témoins et solidaires" (Witnesses and Partners) is now in preparation. This bulletin, which will appear in cyclostyled form, will be available for all French-speaking colporteurs in Europe. It will contain information, advice, exchange of experiences and also be the channel through which articles and background material will be published to complete the colporteurs' preparation and training.

■

Reference was made in BULLETIN No. 8 (1951, p.8) to a French couple in Nîmes who began to give their leisure time to free Scripture distribution. Since then new collaborators have joined the enterprise and the work has extended into ten French departments, and to North Africa, the Cameroons and the Ivory Coast. The group is in close contact with the Freundes-Dienst, referred to elsewhere in this issue, and follows similar principles in its work. In a report recently published, they indicate a circulation of over 100 Bibles, 1,700 New Testaments and nearly 17,000 Gospel portions in France and overseas territories, during the first ten months of 1955. Over 165,000 Gospel tracts were also distributed.

A considerable proportion of the Scriptures have been supplied free or at reduced price by Bible Societies and the Scripture Gift Mission. Although no public appeal was made, contributions by friends in France have continually increased and exceed £1,000 a year. Consideration has been given recently to the possibility of closer co-operation between the Alliance biblique française and the Nîmes group, but no decision has so far been taken.

■

The so-called 'Bible de Jérusalem,' the modern French scholarly Roman Catholic translation of the Bible prepared under the auspices of the Bible School of Jerusalem and until now published in separate instalments, will be published in one volume at the beginning of 1956. This edition is published by the Editions du Cerf in Paris, and runs to 1,750 pages (including the Apocrypha), size 15.5 cm by 21.5 cm.

Germany

A special project has been undertaken by Dr. Alfred Müller, the new general secretary of the *Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany*, for the supply of Scriptures to the prisoners being repatriated from Russia. Funds collected in Germany have enabled the Verband to give a Bible to all those who have been willing to accept one.

One of the repatriated prisoners reported that in his camp in Russia the New Testament was written ten times on old paper cement bags and distributed among the inmates. His relatives had sent him a copy of the New Testament together with other religious writings. The camp administration kept back all the other writings except the Testament. The copies which were prepared so assiduously by the camp inmates, were used regularly for the worship of the prisoners. The repatriate brought back the original copy on being released from the camp.

■

On 1st September last the 'Bibelmission' Committee, which is particularly concerned at the moment in supplying refugees with Scriptures, held its annual meeting in the presence of representatives of the U.B.S. and of the B.F.B.S. and A.B.S., which are supporting the effort financially. Reports on the activity of the past year were presented and indicated that over 20,000 Bibles, 20,000 New Testaments and about 50,000 Portions had been circulated by the Bible missionaries and the various other organisations connected with the effort. A large number of refugees are still living in camps; but the majority have now been settled in houses provided by the local authorities.

The Bible missionaries only started their work during the course of 1955. They now number thirteen, all except three having at least half of their salary and expenses covered from local sources. The free churches have now offered to provide two more Bible missionaries (deaconesses in this case) and to cover their expenses. The aim of the committee is to depend less and less on foreign help and to appeal more and more to the sense of responsibility of the local churches for this service, which it is hoped will soon extend beyond the refugee population and become a means of bringing the large unchurched masses of Germany to read and study the Scriptures.

*

Das Deutsche Bibelarchiv, a non-denominational institute founded in 1931 to study the influence of, or the part played by, the Bible in the various fields of German culture, has organised a Bible exhibition: Schrift, Bild and Druck der Bibel (the Bible—handwritten, illustrated

and printed), illustrating the evolution of Scripture production in Germany from 1255, when the Hamburg Bible—a masterpiece of north German book illustration — in late Roman style, appeared, to modern production. The main part of the exhibition is devoted to the early printed Bibles, including a Gutenberg Bible on parchment and north German and Danish productions. An illustrated catalogue was issued, containing four historical articles on subjects related to the exhibition : handwriting and printing : comparison between two Bibles (the 1255 Hamburg Bible and the Gutenberg 1455 edition) ; the Bible in the early art of printing ; the first Danish Bibles printed in Germany in the 16th century ; Luther's text and Scripture quotations in the Anabaptist tracts of the 16th century.

*

The *East German Bible Society* has published, on behalf of the Evangelical Church in Germany and of the Union of German Bible Societies, a tentative edition of 500 copies of the last revision of the Luther Old Testament. Four hundred copies have been circulated to scholars, pastors and church leaders in Germany for their examination and comments. A revision committee will be appointed later to consider criticisms and suggestions and to prepare the final draft of the revision.

Greece

The supply of Scriptures to the prisons in Greece has always been among the main concerns of the Society. Since many years before the war the Society has been in close contact with the prisons' chaplain and his requirements were supplied at a large discount. After the war, Scriptures were supplied entirely free. Apart from the inclination ordinarily felt towards letting prisons have the priority in free grants of Scriptures, prisons in Greece had this additional incentive for Bible study work : that Bible classes held in all prisons had a very good attendance, and therefore one could be certain that the New Testament would be read and often studied.

Recently the religious supervision of the prisons came under the Apostoliki Diakonia, a body through which most of the official religious activities of the Greek Orthodox Church are now carried on. Last year the Apostoliki Diakonia made a request to the Bible Society for New Testaments to be supplied free to all prisoners, a request which was gladly met. It is estimated that about 10,000 Testaments will be required annually. So far this year 4,617 copies have been donated, or 119 Bibles and 4,498 Testaments. These figures include 42 Testaments and 248 Portions in Albanian, distributed among refugees in camps.

The Apostoliki Diakonia recently received a modern printing press as a gift from the World Council of Churches. An edition of 10,000 New Testaments (Textus Receptus) was published recently, the selling price being about 5/- per copy. Works of the Early Church Fathers have also been published in the original by the Apostoliki Diakonia press.

Interest in the study of the Bible has also increased, reports Mr. Kladis, through the recent publication of books of the Bible with short commentaries (Prophets and Apocalypse). More recently the book of Psalms in the Septuagint text has been issued, accompanied by an interpretative paraphrase of each Psalm and a short exposition. This work was prepared by Professor Trembelas, who had previously produced a New Testament in the original text with an interpretative paraphrase in parallel columns. All these books were published by the Zöe Movement.

Guatemala

The following notes have been received from the Rev. J. W. Limkemann, A.B.S. secretary of the Central America Agency :

On Sunday, August 29, 1955, the Conob Indians of western Guatemala received for the first time the entire New Testament in their own language, from the American Bible Society. That day marked the climax of a quarter of a century of devoted work by the Rev. and Mrs. Newberry Cox, missionaries to Guatemala with the Central American Mission. Forty-thousand people use the Conob dialect, which is one of the 17 language groups of Guatemala that belong to the Maya-Quiché family. The Indian population of the country is given at slightly over one-and-a-half million, or almost one-half of the total.

The American Bible Society had already given the complete New Testament to three language groups of Guatemala, each numbering over 200,000. These are the Quichés, the Mams and the Cakchiquels. The translation of the New Testament into the Kekchi dialect is progressing rapidly. This is the only major language group in Guatemala numbering over 200,000 that still does not have the complete New Testament.

Missionaries generally are convinced that the whole New Testament is needed as a minimum if the Indian who comes to a living faith in Christ is to be firmly established in his faith.

The missionary to the Indians, after overcoming the language problem, faces the second major problem which is illiteracy. Edward F. Sywulka, an authority on missionary work among Guatemala Indians, states : " for most Indian communities there is probably a 90 to 95% illiteracy in Spanish, and even more than that in the Indian languages." Obstacles in the way of literacy of Indians include the decidedly unfavourable attitude of Ladinos towards making their Indian neighbours literate and discouraging disinterestedness of the Indian himself. In fact, the whole social status of the Indian is a problem. It is such because the average Ladino always remembers that he belongs to a superior class of the conquerors and regards all Indians as belonging to the conquered servant class.

Indo China

A bookroom for the display and sale of Scriptures has been opened in Phnom Pen, the capital of Cambodia.

Work is also going on in South Vietnam and a motorcycle with a book-carrying attachment has been provided for the colporteur working in Saigon. There are at present eight full-time and a number of voluntary colporteurs at work in the country.

Iraq

The circulation of Bibles and Testaments practically doubled in 1955 in comparison with the previous year. The Rev. B. Hakken, sub-agent for that country, reports that the majority of sales are to Muslims and that the younger generation has an increasing longing for knowledge and is reading anything it can get. Even Mullahs are showing interest and buying Scriptures. It appears that " the wall of Muslim resistance " is breaking, especially in countries like Iraq, which have no large Christian minorities requiring a greater resistance on the part of the Muslims.

Japan

The *Japan Bible Society* has been presented with a travelling display car by the British and Foreign Bible Society, made to order in Japan.

The van started its activity from the beginning of last October. First it

visited the northern part of Honshu island, then the pacific area of the same island, and afterwards the central mountain district, the so-called "Shinshu and Koshu" area. The van has succeeded not only in displaying the various kinds of Bibles to country people, but also in selling many copies of the Scriptures. Every time the van left Tokyo Bible House it was loaded up with Scriptures and then supplies were replenished at some point mid-way to which Scriptures had been sent beforehand. All the books were sold and the van returned to Tokyo empty.

The main services provided by the Bible van are to present a display for local churches and bookstores of all the varieties of Scriptures available, to provide them with the supplies they need, and in the evening to give film shows promoting the Bible and the work of the Bible Society.

From experience gathered it seems that two vans would be needed to cover the whole of Japan. For it appears desirable that visits should be made to the same towns and districts at least once every quarter.

*

On National Culture Day (November 3), the Japan Bible Society was awarded a special prize by the Mainichi newspaper for the new "Kogotai" (colloquial Japanese) edition of the Bible. The Mainichi, which is one of the three top papers of the country (circulation three million), makes an annual award for the twelve best "cultural publications" of the year, which is the most coveted award in Japanese publication circles. Its publicity value is tremendous, and it is bound to be a great help both for travelling colporteurs and for those who are trying to get bookstores to carry and display the Bible for sale. The award is particularly remarkable in view of the fact that only 0.5% of the nation's population is Christian and until recently Christianity has been despised and oppressed, as being a foreign religion. The Bible has been generally considered a foreign book with little relevance to Japan. Thus, this award recognises the Bible as being a Japanese book and one that has significance for the people. There were 20,000 entries.

Last Spring this edition received another award : it was selected by the National Library Association as one of its "recommended books." This means that its 3,000 member libraries all over the country will be urged to put this edition of the Bible along with other books for special display and recommended reading.

*

The Kogotai edition made Bible Society history in Japan in 1955, and special campaigns to celebrate its publication were held in eight key cities, beginning with Tokyo and ending with Naha in Okinawa. All the meetings were of importance in giving publicity to the Bible. Leading personalities of the different areas were invited to the meetings and newspapers also widely publicised the events and the publication of the Kogotai Bible itself. Almost all the local newspapers published the history of the translation of the Japanese Bible and the significance of the Kogotai Bible publication at this critical time in Japanese history.

Referring to the Okinawa celebrations on 16th October, Mr. Miyakoda, General Secretary of the Japan Bible Society, writes : The meeting, which was held at Educational Hall in Naha, was a splendid celebration, attended by 300 selected representatives from governmental, business and Christian circles. Kogotai Bibles were presented to the President of the Ryukyu Government.

The recently formed Okinawa Bible Committee has been steadily at work, supported by all denominations. The Committee collected 30,000 Yen for the Kogotai celebrations, and hopes to be able to have a colporteur of its own in the near future. The island was recently visited by one of the Japan Bible Society's colporteurs, who had inaugurated a special distribution campaign.

■

The six revisers of the Kogotai Bible, the secretary of the Revision Committee, and the President of the Japan Bible Society, the Rev. Masaki Imaizumi, have been made Honorary Life Members of both the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society. Their certificates of membership were given to them on the occasion of the half-yearly meeting of the Board of the Japan Bible Society, held in December, by Mr. J. C. F. Robertson.

*

Circulation in Japan in 1955 by the Japan Bible Society amounted to 1,872,313 copies of the Scriptures: 89,016 Bibles, 473,042 New Testaments, 1,307,221 Portions and 3,034 Braille Scriptures. Of the Bibles circulated, 80,000 were in the new Kogotai version—60,000 of them being part of an edition specially subsidised, the main sources of the subsidy being the A.B.S. and the B.F.B.S. Circulation in 1954 amounted to about 1,300,000 copies, of which only 40,000 were complete Bibles. The increase in Bible circulation is partly the result of an effort made to circulate at a heavily subsidised price a special popular edition of the colloquial Bible.

*

The Japan Bible Society last summer co-operated with the Lacour evangelistic team which visited the country for two months. Thirty-four American pastors and their wives went to rural Japan during July and August and lived among the people. They were each accompanied by a competent interpreter and a young man from a theological school was appointed to work with the missionaries in each centre selected. The nearest ordained pastor with long experience was made supervisor of the local programme. Three colporteurs were also assigned by the Japan Bible Society to the area covered that year by the Lacour team. They engaged in house-to-house Scripture distribution, in co-operation with the missionary team. Almost 25,000 copies of the Scriptures were sold in the two months' period. A rough tabulation of the reports made by the team shows a total of over 200 baptisms, over 150 persons prepared for baptism, about 900 enquiries and over 2,000 calls. As a result of the three consecutive Lacour campaigns, twenty-two new churches have been established.

■

Many papers, religious and otherwise, have reported the escape to America, via Japan, of the brother of the Dalai Lama of Tibet. It is interesting to note that whilst staying in Japan Mr. Denpa Rabache ordered a Tibetan Bible from the Japan Bible Society and took it with him to the U.S.A.

The American Bible Society is making a gift of various Bibles - about 120 in all - to the library of the International Christian University in Tokyo. The Japan Bible Society is acting as the intermediary agent in this gift.

Korea

A special ceremony took place in Seoul on 20th October, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone for the new Bible House. Bishop Chadwell, of the S. P. G. Mission, presided on behalf of the B.F.B.S. Among the 200 who took

part was the Vice-President of the Republic of Korea. The old Bible House was destroyed in 1950 during the war in Korea. In addressing the gathering, the Rev. Young Bin Im, General Secretary of the *Korean Bible Society*, sketched the background history of the new venture :

" One day I called on Chaplain John O. Woods at the headquarters of U.S. 8th Army, and we talked about the work of the Bible Society in Korea. While we were talking I let slip my concern about the building of a new Bible House in Seoul, for that problem occupied most of my thinking at that time. Chaplain Woods' interest and attention were immediately caught by this and he began to phone here and there to find how to get help for the building of a new Bible House. He finally discovered that AFAK (American Financial Aid for Korea—an American governmental agency) was the organisation through which our project could be fulfilled.

"AFAK finally granted us 17,000 dollars worth of building materials. Then another problem confronted us —that of a site for the building. We had a building site in Chongno, but it was the property of the B.F.B.S. and we had to get their permission to build on it. A month later Mr. Watson of the B.F.B.S. came to Korea and the matter was decided on terms that satisfied AFAK, and we were able to obtain the building materials. The B.F.B.S. granted us not only permission to build on their lot, but also £6,000 for building expenses. I know that God has been with us all through these transactions. Everything was ready to go forward and work began on 22nd August.

" I know that it is of the utmost importance for us to have a Bible House in Korea. A Bible House is where the Bible, the Word of God, which alone can give a nation strong spiritual and moral fibre, is produced and distributed. Without strong spiritual and moral fibre a nation must surely perish. At this time of confusion in Korea it is absolutely necessary to have a Bible House and to produce and distribute the Holy Scriptures . . . ."

*

The Korean Bible Society, which lost large stocks of Scriptures and paper in a fire in Pusan two years ago, has again suffered misfortune through fire, this time losing the negatives and shells of several New Testament editions as well as a number of Scriptures and some paper. This fire occurred in the premises of the Society's printers.

Liberia

The Bible Society has been " on the air " in Liberia for the first time. Secretary Nussbaum, A.B.S. agent for that country, last autumn undertook a Bible Quiz on the programme broadcast from the ELWA station, following the pattern of the A.B.S. Quiz Programme " The Living Bible."

The Secretary also sponsored a " Bible reading contest " among Monrovian Bible Club students, to promote better public reading of the Scriptures. The Liberian Agency provides an award to the winner of each contest. This scheme has aroused considerable enthusiasm and interest.

■

Last July an impressive service of dedication was organised to commemorate the publication of the Gospel of John in Tchien, the first Scripture to be published in that language. The Hon. E. C. B. Jones, Secretary of War of the Liberian Government, who had formerly been district secretary of the Tchien area, attended the meetings and was presented with a copy of the new Gospel. In his remarks, Mr. Jones

paid tribute to the missionaries who had made this translation and gave a warm personal testimony regarding the value of the Bible by recounting what it had meant to him, and what it can do for all who read it.

Mexico

The Mexican Agency of the Bible Society is working on the preparation of a New Testament in simple Spanish, specially intended for the new literates and people with limited education. The Gospel of Luke has now been issued, the work having been done by Professor Juan Diaz Gonzalez, helped by four theological students and thirty-five consultants. The Epistle to the Romans has also appeared, prepared by Dr. Wonderly, A.B.S. translations secretary for Mexico and Central America, who also worked with a large number of consultants. These efforts must be set against the background of the tremendous drive of the Mexican Government to spread literacy in the country. Until this time the Bible Society had only published for new literates sets of eighteen selected passages in large type, also in simple Spanish.

*

Bible Sunday was celebrated for the first time in Mexico in 1918. Since then the participation of the evangelical churches in that celebration has continually increased throughout the country. Bible Sunday, which is kept on the last Sunday of August, is now one of the highlights of the year among evangelicals. Certain churches devote the whole of the month of August to stimulating interest in the reading and study of the Word of God and in Scripture distribution campaigns. Young people and children also generally share in the effort. Bible Sunday is also the occasion for various contests connected with the Bible in Sunday schools.

Collections now exceed $80,000 (Mexican); on the first Bible Sunday just less than 40 years ago the collection amounted to $400. "This progress," says Professor F. E. Estrello, Acting Secretary of the Mexico Agency, "speaks eloquently for the missionary spirit of the evangelical churches of Mexico in favour of the noble cause of Bible Society work."

*

The Gideons and the World Home Bible League are increasing their activities in Mexico. Both organisations are printing New Testaments from their own plates. Circulation figures for the World Home Bible League are not available. General Estrada Medina reports for the Gideons that they are printing Testaments in two sizes in Spanish and in one size in diglot Spanish-English. The group is very active and has organised camps in many cities. Approximately 300 Gideons attended a national meeting in Mexico recently. It is reported that in 1953, this organisation distributed 100,000 New Testaments. In 1954, it distributed 280,000 Testaments. Its instruction book encourages distribution everywhere, except in churches, urging particularly distribution in hotels, motels, schools, places of business, government offices, to the armed forces, to policemen, to firemen, etc. Though the distributors are instructed to distribute without charge, it is known that some books are being sold. The Gideons still depend upon the Bible Society for the few whole Bibles they circulate.

New Guinea

The first Bible House erected in the islands of the South-West Pacific was opened and dedicated in Port Moresby on 15th October, in the presence of His Honour the Administrator of New Guinea. The Rev. Canon H. M. Arrowsmith, General Secretary of the B.F.B.S. in Australia, which is responsible for the work

in New Guinea, and the Chairman of the Commonwealth Council of the B.F.B.S. in Australia, attended this ceremony. It took place under the chairmanship of the Rev. D. E. Ure, chairman of the Port Moresby Auxiliary of the Bible Society.

Addressing the gathering, the Administrator referred to the world-wide activity of the B.F.B.S. and stressed the importance of the opening of the new Bible House : "The opening of this Bible House at Port Moresby to-day ranks with events which extend their influence through the lives of many thousands of people, and through many generations. In establishing this new centre for its work, the British and Foreign Bible Society is extending to yet another field its world-wide mission of encouraging greater circulation of the Holy Scriptures. Its decision to open a Bible House in the Territory comes at a time when literacy is increasing among the native people, and this centre will be invaluable in making more Bibles available for those who are now learning to read."

The Port Moresby Bible House, the cost of which has been contributed by Bible Society supporters and others in Australia, will minister to the needs of more than 2,000,000 people. The population speak over 500 languages—a huge challenge to Bible Society work in those parts.

Scotland

During the All-Scotland Crusade which was held during the spring of 1955, in which Dr. Billy Graham co-operated, the *National Bible Society of Scotland* made available, free of charge, to local campaign committees over 25,000 copies of St. John's Gospel. These were given away to enquirers who came forward at meetings held at places other than the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, where Dr. Billy Graham preached.

It was estimated that sales in the Society's Glasgow depot for the first five months of 1955 were at least one-third greater than for the corresponding period of 1954—an indication of an awakening interest in the Bible through the Billy Graham campaign.

The Society has provided (with the permission of the B.F.B.S., the original publishers) 100,000 copies of a special illustrated edition of St. Luke's Gospel, at a cost of approximately £2,000. These have been made available for free distribution by those taking part in the new "visitation" phase of the "Tell Scotland" movement which began in the autumn of 1955. These Gospels are not intended for indiscriminate distribution, but are to be given away carefully to any who express a desire to use them as a start to Bible reading, and particularly to individuals or families found to be without any church connection.

■

An Essay competition, open to Third-Year pupils in all Junior Secondary Schools, has resulted in over 5,500 entries being received and 292 Bibles being presented as prizes to the successful competitors. In the previous year there were over 3,100 entries and 175 prizes. The standard of essay this year was definitely higher than in the previous year. The 1955-1956 competition has been extended to cover Junior and Senior Secondary Schools in Scotland.

■

An edition of single Gospels in Union Nyanja has recently been published by the N.B.S.S. For the first time such Gospels are issued with an index of 4-6 pages, prepared in four parts : references to the Acts of Jesus ; to the Sayings of Jesus ; an index of important words grouped according to roots ; and an index of

proper names. All the Gospels including indexes are printed on 96 pages (the type varying according to the length of the text), and are offered either with plain covers or with a coloured illustrated (4 pictures) cover. The edition is under the joint NBSS/BFBS imprint.

The autumn issue of the biennial bulletin of the N.B.S.S. FOR ALL NATIONS, was mainly devoted to the speeches delivered at the 1955 N.B.S.S. annual meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Dr. Billy Graham was one of the speakers. Introducing his address, based on a few verses from Psalm 119, the speaker said :

" There is one point that I think we should keep in mind. It is a fact—at least in the United States—the Bible has become almost a fetish. We have it in our homes, in every hotel room, in many aeroplanes, and there are Bibles in every court-room in the U.S.A.—everywhere there are Bibles—but there is an appalling ignorance of what the Bible says and there is an appalling lack of reading the Bible. We hear a great deal about criticism of the Bible and critics of the Bible, but most of the people I come in contact with daily have no inkling of what the Bible actually says. They haven't actually read the Bible for themselves and their criticisms are based on mere hearsay. One of the great needs of our day is not only distribution but encouragement to read and study the Bible for ourselves to see what the Bible has to say . . . ."

And concluding his speech Dr. Graham added : " Many people wonder what Christ would say if He came back to earth. His words would be strangely familiar because He would be quoting the Scriptures and telling us what He said two thousand years ago. He is ageless and changeless. I find in my personal ministry that when I preach the Bible with authority and quote its words it is like a rapier, like a sword in my hand to win men and women to a knowledge of Christ. There is something mysteriously powerful about the quoted Word of God. So when we distribute the Word, when we declare the Word, when we read the Word of God, and when we encourage other to read it too, we are doing the greatest business on earth."

Echoing the above speaker's warning, the chairman of the N.B.S.S., the Rt. Rev. K. C. H. Warner, Bishop of Edinburgh, stressed in his presidential address at the Edinburgh meeting the acuteness of the problem of the use of the Bible : " I heard Dr. Billy Graham say at our meeting in Glasgow on Saturday that the Bible was a fetish in America. There was one in every hotel, every court room, and so forth, but that does not mean that people know their Bibles. We must get them to open the Book to find out what is inside. We want to help them all we can to learn what is in the Bible, especially what is in the New Testament. The provision of Scriptures is absolutely essential. This is our primary job as a Bible Society. It is also our concern to do what we can to get people to read the Bibles which we supply, and to help them to understand the fundamental facts of the Christain faith . . . ."

Turkey

Neither the Bible House nor any member of the staff were harmed during the recent rioting which took place in Istanbul, writes the Rev. P. Nilson, Bible Society sub-agent for Turkey. The situation was, however, very tense :

" The rioting was mainly aimed at Greek shops, but in many sections of the town the mob was not very discriminating. Along the main street where the Bible shop is located almost every shop not owned by a Muslim Turk was destroyed. Fortunately, for reasons I cannot defin-

itely know, the Bible shop itself was not touched. A friend who lives next door says he saw one or two men standing in front of it all during the rioting directing the rioters away. This, if true, seems to indicate that there was organisation behind the events and the organisers were not willing to harm foreign property. Other shops in our block were badly damaged. The shop immediately adjacent was gutted and even set afire.

"The staff were all unharmed, although they had some very trying times in their homes. Yakup had to show his identity paper to three different mobs during the night to prove that he was not a Greek. A Turkish neighbour indirectly protected Badrik's home. Both colporteurs were ill with nervous exhaustion for two days after."

United States

The *American Bible Society* has just completed for the blind the entire New Testament in Armenian Braille in seven volumes.

As at June 30, 1955, the Society had distributed to the blind over a half million volumes (501,968). Appeals for the embossed Scriptures and especially the Talking Book records continue to increase, the Bible Society having distributed during the last two decades more than twice the number of volumes issued during the previous 100 years to the blind.

■

Because of the damage caused by the recent floods in the northeastern United States in August and October, the American Bible Society has offered to replace without charge damaged Bibles for both churches and individuals throughout the region. It was estimated that more than 25,000 Bibles would be needed in about 15 languages. The Bible Society also emphasised its readiness to fill requests from all stricken families, whether or not they had previously owned Bibles.

■

The budget of the American Bible Society for 1956 has been set at $3,858,000 an increase of $314,000 over the budget for 1955. Of this increase, it is estimated that $155,000 will come from gifts and from income on investments; and the balance from sales.

■

Admiral Byrd's new expedition to the Antarctic has been supplied with Scriptures by the American Bible Society. Admiral Byrd has expressed his warm appreciation for them.

■

An international scholarly symposium to assess the famous Dead Sea Scrolls after a decade of investigation and study will be held in New York in September, 1957, under the sponsorship of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, it is announced by Dr. Nelson Glueck, president. Competent scholars in all countries will be invited. Panel discussions of the scrolls will be held in archaeology, linguistics, biblical textual criticism, rabbinic analysis, paleography, phylacteries and the "Teacher of Righteousness."

"The ancient scrolls, discovered in 1947 by Bedouin shepherds in a cave near the Dead Sea, have been the topic of scholarly and lay discussion the world over," Dr. Glueck said. "No other archaeological or inscriptional find of the past century has evoked wider interest in the Hebrew Bible and early Christianity.

"The scrolls and fragments have supplied answers to some old problems. But they have posed many more questions than they have clarified. The year 1957, which will mark a decade since the discovery of

the scrolls, will provide an opportune time to reach something of a concensus of opinion, and assess with greater confidence the significance of these documents."

*

Since the beginning of its work in 1939, Gospel Recordings, Inc. has sent out 861,600 Gospel records to 140 countries in 1,079 different languages and dialects. Since more than a thousand tribes have no written language and more than half of the population of the world is unable to read, there is great need for an oral presentation of the Gospel which is understood by the illiterates as well as those who can read. The Gospel records, it must be remembered, generally give only selections from the Scriptures, and in most cases evangelistic messages and hymns as well. The records are distributed without charge.

*

The first edition of St. John's Gospel in Songo recently arrived in Angola from New York. They had been printed with the help of funds raised by the young people of the Westminster Fellowship in the Presbyterian Synod of New Jersey. It was their idea to try to raise funds to pay for the publication of a portion of the Scriptures to be sent to the mission field.

A tentative edition of the Gospel of Mark prepared by the same translator, T. E. Wilson, a missionary of the Plymouth Brethren, had been issued in 1936. There are about 700 Christian Songos out of 45,000 people speaking that language.

*

For the past two years the A.B.S. has produced special "Christmas Gospels" in English, in the form of a little booklet, with a cover specially designed to make it acceptable as a Christmas greeting. In 1954 the Gospel of Luke was produced in this way. For 1955 the Gospel of Matthew was chosen and 1,400,000 copies published.

The response to the publication of a Spanish edition of the same Gospels for the past two years has exceeded all expectations. The Spanish version for 1955 contained the Christmas story from Luke 1, 2:1-40 and Matthew 2:1-11, of which 750,000 copies were printed.

A Korean edition of 25,000 copies of Luke, in the same format, was published for the first time for Christmas 1955.

*

In 1954 in Los Angeles, California, one hundred Presbyterian churches of the California Synod participated in a Bible reading crusade. In 1955 the entire Synod of California, including Utah and Nevada, sponsored a similar crusade during the month of October, beginning on Worldwide Communion Sunday, October 2.

Even though the previous year's crusade was only in Los Angeles, 44,000 copies of the Gospel of St. Mark, from which selections for the city-wide Bible reading were selected, had been needed to fill the needs of the churches, according to the Rev. Leonard T. Boyd, chairman of the American Bible Society Committee for the Los Angeles Presbytery. The over-all results of the Los Angeles campaign of last year in promoting the distribution and reading of the Scriptures was so successful that the Synod-wide programme was instituted. This time the Synod-wide crusade took for its theme "Ye are my witnesses." Secretary Nettinga of the Society's Southern California District said the 1955 goal was to have 100,000 readers throughout the Synod.

The Book of Acts was selected as the portion to be used by the participating churches. A special jacket bearing the Worldwide Com-

munion symbol was prepared for the crusade. Part of the cost of the portions was underwritten by the Bible Society.

For the blind, the entire Book of Acts in one Braille volume, or on five Talking Book records, were kept available at the Society's district office in Pasadena.

*

A manuscript of the New Testament in Christian Aramaic (Syriac), thought to date from the fourth or fifth century, is now on display at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The manuscript is in excellent condition, with only a few leaves missing. It is said by several biblical scholars to be the oldest known copy of the New Testament.

*

Government officials and other Washington residents may now get a recorded Scriptural message by dialing a telephone number.

The automatic telephone "inspirational service," which has proved popular in several other cities, was inaugurated there under the auspices of the Christian Business Men's Committee of Washington.

When the number DIstrict 7-0410 is dialed, a 60-second tape recording of Scripture verses is heard.

The sponsors said more than 100 calls a day were made after the service was launched.

*

The firm of General Motors has had a pamphlet printed entitled "How should one read the Bible?" The first edition of 300,000 copies was distributed among the workers. General Electric and the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. had had a further 100,000 copies printed, as the demand for this pamphlet by the industrial workers was so great that it exceeded that for any other form of literature. Recently the churches and Sunday schools have asked for copies of the same leaflet.

*

During the three years since the publication of the first copy of the American Revised Standard Version of the Bible, in present-day language, 3,600,000 copies have been sold in the U.S.A. This is a sales record far exceeding that on any so-called "best sellers list" at any time or in any country. After taking into account publishers' waste, one copy of this edition of the Bible is sold in the U.S.A. every thirty seconds. In addition 2,600,000 copies of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament and 805,000 children's Bibles were sold during the same period.

Miscellaneous

At an international meeting of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Bern last autumn, reports indicated that from 1920-1952, the members of the organisation had circulated 594,276,376 Bibles and religious publications in 101 languages. It was also stated that the full membership of the organisation amounted to 625,000 and that in 1954 their missionaries spent 80,814,996 hours in house-to-house visits and gave 313,814 public speeches!

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The editorial in the October, 1955 issue of INTERPRETATION, a quarterly related to the Union Theological Seminary, Virginia, U.S.A., is devoted to the subject of Protestantism and the Bible (in connection with the date commemorating the Reformation). Among other things the writer says:

"Protestantism was born with the Bible in its hand. Throughout its history it has wrought its greatest triumphs when it has stood, like Bunyan's minister, with its back to the world, its face toward heaven, and the book in its hand. Contrariwise, when the book has been lost, the faith has suffered.

"For many Protestants to-day, the Bible is a lost book. It may be a best seller. It may adorn the shelves of public and private libraries. It may be carried by travellers. It may be given to every serviceman. It may be found in the dresser drawer of every reputable American hotel. But in spite of all this, it is for most Protestants a little known book. The Bible suffers from the paradox that it is perhaps the most widely sold and least understood book in the world.

"Recent years have witnessed a definite rebirth of interest in the Bible on the part of scholars, and a very significant effort to look at our world in the light of the Bible's message. But this re-discovery of the Bible has not gone far enough. It must get out of the scholar's study into the life of the people. When, in the days of King Josiah, the book of the law was found in the Temple, it had no value until its message was read and believed and obeyed. And it was not sufficient that the King and the priests alone should hear it and respond to it. We are told that "the king went up to the house of the Lord and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem .... all the people, *both small and great*; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord. And the king .... made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments .... and *all the people joined in the covenant*" (II Kings 23: 2, 3). The Bible cannot do its rightful work in the life of modern Protestantism, until *all the people* hear the words of the book and join in covenant to believe and obey them ...."

AUDIO VISUAL AID NOTES

New Films

The Rev. E. J. Heuer, of the B.F.B.S. in Canada, the producer of the film, "Frontiersmen," has completed another Bible Society film: "To Bala for a Bible," telling the story of Mary Jones' journey to Bala when she called on the Rev. Charles to collect her Bible. The film consists mainly of the views taken on the spot, with a girl representing Mary Jones on her trip. It ends with a few shots taken in Bible House, London and one of two Korean girls reading the Bible in their own language.

The cost of individual copies of this film has not yet been fixed. This information will be published in a later issue of the BULLETIN. The B.F.B.S. in Canada will also be glad to answer enquiries about it. The script of the film is available at U.B.S. headquarters.

Here is an introduction to the film, written by Mr. Heuer for the readers of the BULLETIN:

The story of Mary Jones has held our fascination for many years. So when an opportunity came to visit the British Isles, North Wales was one of the "musts" on our list. Mrs. Heuer and I were hoping, of course, to take some motion pictures of the countryside about Bala but detailed plans had to be deferred until we arrived there. We conceived the idea

of photographing the rugged hills and beautiful valleys and lakes and of using these scenes as a background against which to relate briefly the story of that brave Welsh girl.

Eleanor Jones of Abergynolwyn, who had previously posed in the film strip produced by the Parent Society, graciously consented to be photographed in an old-fashioned dress walking through parts of the countryside. This added a bit of action to the scenery which, otherwise, would have been rather lifeless.

No attempt was made to dramatize the story. Such dramatization would have required much more time than we had available. The pictures themselves, were taken in only four days, two in May and two in June. The task was only half done when rainy weather intervened and thus it was necessary to arrange for a second trip.

One of our aims when visiting England in the spring of 1954, for the Third Jubilee Celebrations, was to take pictures in England and Wales. We hoped to use this footage in a comprehensive film (to be ready about a year from now) showing the work of the Society in England, in missionary areas such as Africa, and in Canada. However, conversations with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation indicated that it would be helpful in procuring permission to have Bible Society films televised, on sustaining time, if they could be either 14 minutes or 29 minutes in length. It soon became obvious when we began to edit the footage taken overseas, that we could not include the pictures photographed in Wales in the comprehensive film and keep within the 29 minute time limit. We therefore made a separate 14 minute film entitled " To Bala for a Bible " which outlined the story of Mary Jones against the scenic background of that epic 25 mile walk. After this had been screened at a District Secretaries' Conference, the General Board authorized the manufacture of prints so that the film could be made available for use in all our Auxiliaries.

We believe that " To Bala for a Bible " was produced at very reasonable expense. This was possible because there were no travel costs, as we were already in Great Britain. Nor was there any charge for editing. This I was very pleased to do in my hobby time. A Magnetic-Recorder projector provided for us by the North Alberta Auxiliary enabled us to add sound at a very low cost indeed, especially as Mrs. Donald Simms whole-heartedly donated her time and talent to record the music on the organ in Knox United Church, Edmonton. Thus we were able to provide the firm which manufactures the prints with a magnetic tape of the music which we had chosen and which we hope is in keeping with the Welsh scenes.

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The American Bible Society has issued a film on Bible Society work in South Korea under the title " . . . my right and my cause . . ." The title comes from the 9th Psalm, part of which is read on the sound track. The pictures tell the dramatic story of the making of the Revised Hankul Bible for Korea, a Bible in which the simplified Hankul spelling replaces the classical, ornate Korean alphabet and can be read more easily and with greater understanding by the Korean people.

With the exception of one scene, the picture was photographed in Korea. The making of the Hankul Bible was filled with dramatic and stirring incidents, which have been portrayed in the film. The Rev. Young Bin Im, secretary of the Korean Bible Society, and responsible for the translation and production of the Bible, with Mrs. Im re-enact some of the more significant events of the four-year period covered by this film.

The picture is filmed in 16mm Kodachrome colour with sound. The film, with sound track, runs for about 26 minutes, and comes on one 1,200 foot reel. For the opening and closing of the picture, a professional Korean musician plays on the cheng, a Korean pipe organ used only for sacred music. Drums, harp and pipes playing traditional Korean numbers, create an additional musical background for the film.

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The British and Foreign Bible Society is now producing sound films fitted with magnetic stripes, on which a second language can be added. Thus a film with, say, an English sound track, can have added to it, on the magnetic stripe, the same commentary translated into the language of the country in which it is to be used. The film can then be run in *either* English *or* the second language which has been added on the stripe. Such films, however, can only be run through a special magnastripe projector, models of which are being produced in larger quantities to-day. This device of magnetic stripes can be used for adding any second language, and will be especially appreciated in countries like Africa, where the commentary can be added in any local dialect. The B.F.B.S. can have the magnetic stripe added to any film ordered from them, if requested to do so by the purchaser.

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The B.F.B.S. Audio-Visual Aid Department is making copies of a 16mm colour film shot by Secretary James R. Roe in Cyprus and describing Bible Society colportage work on that island.

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Speaking at the U.B.S. Regional Conference at Boldern last September on co-operation in the field of audio-visual aid, the Rev. Frans Visser said with regard to film production : " It is very important that any Society contemplating the production of new films should contact other Bibles Societies early on in the process and, as far as possible, make allowances for the requirements in other countries, so that there is more chance that films can also be used beyond the borders of the producing country."

This recommendation was unanimously agreed upon by the meeting.

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From a report prepared by Mr. Ian Morrison (see above under Borneo), we gather that a secondary purpose of his trip to that area, besides assessing the need for Scriptures, was to collect " information to be used as the basis of a film on the work among the Muruts, and its relation to the Scriptures."

" One of the reasons for visiting Long Luping was its suitability as a purely Murut centre, for making pictures of the people, their manner of life and the Church in their midst. The co-operation of the people was remarkable, as was their skill in acting a part before the camera. In the evening the headman asked if he could arrange about twelve different cineshots in typical surroundings for next day. At 8.30 a.m. he announced that everything was ready. We went from one "location" to the other and finished in a few hours what would normally take at least a day."

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Mr. Henry H. Ragatz, Secretary for Audio-Visual Aids in the American Bible Society, sends the following interesting notes on trends in religious film production in the U.S.A. :

" Motion pictures of stories which are set in overseas lands represent an increasing proportion of the new films made for religious use in the U.S.A. Several of these point up

sharply the conflict taking place in areas where the Christian missionary is being opposed by communist forces. Without exception, these films have been photographed in the areas involved in the story. A few employed local professional actors, but for the most part, Christian nationals act out the parts and the missionaries portray their own roles. Some have all the dramatic impact of a professional fictional picture.

" This emphasis on ' the missionary view ' has been noticed in connection with films relating to the work of the Church within the U.S.A. In a recent list of 21 new 16mm church films, eleven dealt with the Christian programme among the Navaho Indians of the south western part of the country.

" Perhaps this may be viewed as a reflection of national thinking along the lines of a shrinking world. The average citizen in the United States is to-day as aware of the plight of the farmer in Burma as he is of the plight of the American farmer in the drought areas who is receiving federal aid. Perhaps it is natural to expect that American interest follows American dollars. Fortunately it is undeniably true that the outreaching view of the Church executives responsible for the production of these pictures is Christian in its origin and in no sense political. In a sense, the present situation reverses that of a few years ago and it is interesting to think that perhaps a general public interest in the materialistic and political situation of fellow citizens in other parts of the world stimulates also a concern for their spiritual welfare.

" Such films are widely used in churches in the United States."

Television

Readers of the BULLETIN will recall an earlier report on the preparation and use of one-minute daily Bible-reading films for television use in the U.S.A. A new series of 32 films was prepared for use in 1955, Thanksgiving through Christmas. Approximately 250 stations requested these films and agreed to use them. In 1953 (the first year these were offered), 94 stations used them ; in 1954, 166. The 1955 series uses one family for all daily readings. The father and mother are professional television performers and are active members of a Presbyterian church in Chicago. Their two daughters and a five-year-old boy constitute the family.

The readings take place either in the kitchen, dining room, living room or children's bedroom of a home. Sometimes the mother reads only to one or two of the children, and in some instances the father reads to the entire family. In several, the eldest girl reads.

Promotion Materials

A "propaganda" memo notebook was distributed free of charge by the Bible Society agency in Venezuela to those who attended the United Convention of Evangelical Churches, at Barquisimeto last summer (the Convention meets every five years). On the inside front cover are some interesting facts about Bible Society aims and work. The inside back cover gives the Agency's circulation figures since 1940 and the back cover calls attention to the "month of the New Testament" (September) and to the "month of the Bible" (October). Mr. Kenneth Bystrom, Secretary for Venezuela, writes in this connection :

" We gave the note books together with a pencil clipped to the book for the delegates to take notes of sermons, business sessions, etc. We felt it was a good way to keep the name Agencias Biblicas Unidas before the people. Another booklet was prepared where no mention was made of Convencion Unida on the front cover. This other booklet was used at the Baptist Convention and was

prepared in such a way that it could be used almost anywhere. I believe we distributed about one thousand of them in all.

"We also published last year a little leather memo book that was sent as a gift to our correspondents at Christmas. It was very much appreciated by both missionaries and nationals and many folk commented on it. Our customers seem to appreciate very much some small remembrance and we believe it creates good will and eventually a greater circulation of Scriptures by the Bible Agencies."

For the second year in succession the Bible Society took part in the Trade Fair of Salonica, held every year in the month of September. (See BULLETIN No. 21, p.21.) In the Society's booth this year a large poster of 2 by 4 metres, was exhibited showing a sower on the left-hand side, and on the right-hand side at the top, a globe encircled by a hand bearing the inscription "In 1,100 languages and dialects." Underneath the globe was a large open book, on the left page of which was written "The Bible" and on the right page: "The answer to the main problems of man." A similar poster, but without the sower and smaller in size, has been placed in the electric railway station at Piraeus and another one, in what is known as day-glo colouring, will shortly be placed at the Athens station. The Society intends to place similar posters in railways stations in the most important towns.

BOOK REVIEW

The Bible To-day

Under this title the Queen's Printers (Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd.) have recently issued in book form the material contained in the special supplement on the Bible by *The Times* newspaper in 1954. This was a tribute by *The Times* to the work of the Bible Societies over the past one hundred and fifty years.

The sub-title of the book describes it as dealing with "historical, social and literary aspects of the Old and New Testaments" and it contains a wealth of information from the pens of a group of well-known biblical scholars, including H. H. Rowley, T. W. Manson, C. F. D. Moule and G. D. Driver. The book has in it all the illustrations used in the Supplement—and they were many; while some of the articles have been enlarged for republication. In addition to the articles such as one might expect in a book of this kind, there are studies in the apocryphal books of the New Testament and in the history of the English Bible. Two Roman Catholic writers (Monsignor Ronald Knox and Father Sebastian Bullough) are among the contributors and the music critic of *The Times* writes an interesting article on "Music and the Bible." The chapter directly bearing on the Bible Societies gives a clear account of the origins and development of the work.

The price—25s. 0d.—is not at all exorbitant for the amount of information conveyed. It is a most useful summary of the present state of biblical research and a valuable reference book for all those interested in the origins and influence of the English Bible.

Charles William Turner

This issue of the BULLETIN was already in the press when news was received of the sudden death of Dr. Charles William Turner, on December 12th last. Dr. Turner had been in the service of the American Bible Society for twenty-two years, the greater part of which were spent in Argentina, as executive Secretary of the joint American Bible Society-British and Foreign Bible Society Agency in Buenos Aires. At the time of his death he had seen the fulfilment of months and years of work involved in arranging for the building of a new Bible House in Buenos Aires, which is being opened shortly.

Dr. Turner was particularly helpful to the General Secretary of the U.B.S. during his visit to Argentina in 1954, and his co-operation in U.B.S. affairs will be long remembered. As has been said elsewhere, he will be missed for "his incisive earnestness, his humour, his faith in great possibilities, his scorn of the inadequate, his vigorous espousal of Christ's cause and his devotion to his Lord . . He was indeed a man for whom lovers of the Bible and it's world wide distribution could give thanks and mourn his passing."

Roy Madsen : is the new A.B.S. Secretary of the Churches Department. He succeeds the late Frank Mann in the post. One of his main tasks is the preparation of the Advisory Council meeting, at which once a year representatives of over 50 denominations examine the Society's proposed budget for the following year and recommend it to the Board. Roy Madsen, a Baptist layman, was director of the radio and television department of the American Baptist Convention before joining the A.B.S. staff. Prior to that he had been personnel manager in a big commercial enterprise in Los Angeles for eighteen years.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

THE REV. ALF HAUGE is General Secretary of the Norwegian Bible Society.

PROFESSOR DR. I. KADAR is General Secretary of the Hungarian Bible Council.

THE REV. ROBERT STEINER is President of the Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany.

THE REV. FRANS VISSER is Secretary for Audio-Visual Aids on the staff of the Netherlands Bible Society.

MR. CASPAR RISSI is one of the collaborators in the work of the Freundes Dienst.

MR. L. R. STEDEFORD is Secretary of the B.F.B.S. North Africa Agency, having his headquarters in Algiers.